

# MICHAEL J. FOX ON BACK TO THE FUTURE

Number 21/\$2.95

# GALACTIC JOURNAL

## THE SCIENCE-FICTION & FANTASY ALTERNATIVE

THE MAKING OF

# A L I E N S

Interviews with:

- \* JAMES CAMERON
- \* GALE ANNE HURD
- \* MICHAEL BIEHN
- \* STAN WINSTON
- \* THE SFX OF *ALIENS*
- \* *ALIEN* SCREENWRITER DAN O'BANNON

**also in this issue:**

GEORGE ROMERO: Decade of the Dead, ALEXANDER COURAGE & The Lost Lyrics of *STAR TREK*, WILLIAM FRIEDKIN: To Live and Die In The *Twilight Zone*, ROBERT ENGLUND: Nightmare on V Street, Making *Fright Night* and more...





# GALACTIC JOURNAL MAGAZINE

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Steven Simak

Science-fiction fans accustomed to the average self-congratulating 'shoot for the stars' editorials which plague the majority of today's periodicals devoted to the genre may be a little surprised by my strong condemnation of those involved with it. Recently as science-fiction becomes a more respectable category of mainstream cinematic fare people have flocked to indulge their insatiable desires to be removed from mundane everyday life whether it be the elderly finding a fountain of youth and ascending to the heavens in Cocoon, Marty McFly's comic encounter with Sophocles in Back to the Future or experiencing the biggest and most successful fantasy of last year, Rambo: First Blood II where Stallone singlehandedly picks up the slack of Milius' right wing vision, Red Dawn and shows us how far a little courage and muscle can go. This insipid nonsense is further evidence of how much the American public is willing to stomach and endure.

In a way the cinema has transformed itself into a narcotic; establishing and redefining reality, allowing one to escape the constraints of everyday living and find refuge within the confines of a new reality. The problem though isn't with the films, but with the people who watch them.

Lately, we've been inundated with a bevy of mediocrity. Last summers best sf film, Back to the Future is a classic compared to the rest of

last summers crop (or more accurately crap), but is really far from the classic it was hailed as when it was released. Anyone who compares it to It's A Wonderful Life is either braindead, insane or both.

Science-fiction has failed where it should be best at succeeding...influencing, changing and foreshadowing the future. Sf is a powerful medium and has the ability to affect change. Few could doubt that without Orwell's cautionary tale 1984 (which was brilliantly adapted to the screen by Michael Radford) we would be alot less aware of the forces which manipulate and control our society and that of others.

But the problem of today's science-fiction film is not that it has degenerated into purely escapist fare. There is nothing wrong with escapist entertainment, in fact, we'd probably all be crazy without it. The problem is indicative of a greater one. The heart of sf's inadequacies truly being recognized as a legitimate genre (and it has secured this status to a marginal degree only because of its' sheer commerciality) is that sf has become an apolitical medium in the cinema for apathetic fans whose concerns rest more firmly in their knowledge of the Enterprise's Naval Construction Contract Number than the real issues which face the real world.

Star Trek, the television series, no matter how overly optimistic, often within the context of its action/adventure plots introduced a variety of valid questions about the society that was watching it. Episodes like "Dagger of the Mind" spoke directly to the morality of a generation, that in this case, was wrestling with the qesiton of how to treat the mentally ill. Science-fiction has ceased to be a forum for ideas and is simply two hours of satiation for man's impoverished id seeking to satisfy his lust for sex, violence and happy endings. That's great! Stylish sex, violence and happy endings are a staple of my moviegoing too, but there must be more. This can only happen if fans begin to shed their shells and begin to care about reality again.

Why is it that those who should care about the future the most, care the least?

\* \* \* \* \*

Welcome to Galactic Journal #21. Probably the best way to understand why the folks at the office say "we're conquering the science-fiction universe" is to read this issue. I think you'll find our material "surprisingly good", Media-Source did. Best Regards.

MARK A. ALTMAN



# LEAPIN' LIZARDS!



## REFLECTING ON THE RISE AND FALL OF V

BY MARK A. ALTMAN

### JUNE CHADWICK

An alien who has come to earth assuming a human guise could not pick a more attractive persona than that of June Chadwick. Standing at an imposing 5'7", the 120 pound British actress gradually became one of V's greatest assets. June Chadwick who was introduced in the first episode of the V television series played the seductive, no-nonsense military commander of the visitor fleet, Lydia. Lydia, like Michael Ironside's Ham Tyler soon became one of V's most popular characters and is prominently featured in the comic book and other V spin-offs.



### ROBERT ENGLUND

Robert Englund is hardly the person one would expect after having seen him portray Willie in both V miniseries and the television show. Unlike the quiet, gentle and uncertain visitor, Englund is self-assured, opinionated, loquacious and eloquent. He does not hesitate to voice both his commendations and criticisms of both V and the other projects he has been involved with in the past. Englund has appeared in a wide variety of roles ranging from a surfer in John Milius' Big Wednesday to Bloodbrothers to Gregory Harrison's boxing coach in The Fighter.

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## REPLACING PAMELA

The producers in doing the weekly series were looking for a rival to Diana, in much the same vein as Sarah Douglas' insidious portrayal of Pamela in V: The Final Battle. "They wanted someone Diana could hiss at," June asserts. And they found what they were looking for in June Chadwick. It was not difficult for her to come onto a set where most of the cast had worked together before on two miniseries. "Everyone made me feel comfortable. I'd seen Jane in the first two miniseries and we became very good friends. Marc Singer came over and welcomed me." The fact that June was such good friends with Jane Badler may be hard to imagine considering their venomous on-screen personas, but as Chadwick says, "It's called acting."

Making the jump from England to America was not an easy one, she soon found that American producers were not too interested in an actress with a strong British accent so she worked to tone it down. Still, the change in surroundings was disconcerting. "I thought England was huge until I came to America, where everyone thought it was the center of the world - except the Soviets. I'd have to go through half a newspaper just to find a small clip on England."

## DEVELOPING LYDIA

The dramatic changes in cast that the show underwent in January appealed to June giving her a chance to expand her character. Originally the writers seemed unable to fully intergrate her fully into the ensemble cast, but in latter episodes Lydia became more than just a foil to Diana's plans, but an integral part of the show and often the origin of much of the conflict aboard the mothership. Chadwick, unlike her clever performance in Rob Reiner's This Is Spinal Tap was not really given the opportunity to improvise, "The writers decided in what direction she would go although they gauged it by watching me in certain scenes." Chadwick distinguishes the character of Lydia from Diana by pointing out that "she loves her brother very much. I like the way she wants power, but still feels an allegiance to the leader and others. She's not as ruthless as Diana." June is pleased by the abundance of mail she's received and tries to respond personally to the many missives she gets. She is surprised by the diverse range of people who write. "It's not just kids, I get fan mail from grandmothers." The thought of young girls pretending to be Lydia and Diana playing V is a far cry from America's Barbie doll days of ten years ago. She attributes Frank Ashmore's return to the series as Philip to the huge amount of fan mail he was receiving at NBC. She notes V has a tremendous appeal to children and is surprised by its relatively weak ratings, "It has car chases, soap opera, everything

in it appealed to everyone." Despite the comic book nature of the series, June does not believe she or anyone else should look down on it as being "inferior" to anything else. "It's high camp and should be treated that way."

## SF AND V

Science-fiction has always held an appeal for June who is fascinated by the genre. She praises the early science-fiction films like George Melies' A Trip to the Moon noting that "the spaceships are very much like that which went to the moon." While she watched Dr. Who and Lost in Space in her native England she also admits that, "I liked Star Trek and all the films." Part of V's appeal, she believes, is that the show's premise is not too absurd. The idea that aliens could land tomorrow is a plausible concept and that they harbor evil intentions is certainly not impossible.

## THE FALL OF V

Chadwick was dismayed by the series' failings, "There was always a rush to do the episodes. I'd get a script right before we started shooting." One of the show's most publicized difficulties which has been vociferously protested in the media by many of the cast is the show's biggest battle whose only finality was that the producers lost and that was the battle with the NBC Standards and Practices Department, the censors. June talked about the variety of excellent make-up work, green blood and an excellent fight scene between Marc Singer and Duncan Regher which all fell victim to the scissors of the censors. Personally she became embroiled in the battle when Standards and Practices demanded the producers reshoot a scene in which Lydia is drunk and consuming a variety of alcoholic beverages celebrating the royal wedding of Charles and Diana. The problem: June was really drunk. "I wanted to be in the proper frame of mind for the scene," says June. Fortunately, she has undergone very little make-up work, a process which didn't appeal to her. She also shares her co-star Badler's disdain for consuming a bevy of rodents and insects to maintain the on-screen character's sustenance. "It's not necessary," June says of the variety of gross-outs that became a staple of the series. "It was overdone."

## BEYOND V

June is no newcomer to the American scene, she's appeared in Magnum P.I., a tv movie Sparkling Cyanide and Roger Corman's low-budget quickie, Forbidden World. This Is Spinal Tap was a challenging film for her in that the script outlined the role, but the dialogue was improvised

to lend to the documentary-like feel of the film which follows the exploits of a fictitious Heavy Metal rock band. Chadwick lavishly praised her director, Rob Reiner. "His sophisticated wit will definitely win him an Academy Award one day." "Roger is great," Chadwick says of Roger Corman, the former president of New World Pictures who gave such directors as Francis Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Paul Bartel and James Cameron their starts in the business and is hated by as many as he is loved. June was astonished with what they accomplished on such a low budget although what appears so realistic on the screen was a nightmare on the set. "The sets were made of cardboard where you would fall through them at the slightest touch." Her greatest thrill was coming onto the set of V and finding out that "things didn't fall down when I leaned against them." Among the many challenges June faced in confronting the bizarre and often strenuous world of filming V on a day to day basis were the make-up, fights and feeding on living victuals. However, none of these compared to her most testing obstacle. "The most challenging thing about the show was walking across the bridge with high heels. They dug into the set which was made of fruit carts."

**"THE MOST CHALLENGING THING ABOUT THE SHOW WAS WALKING ACROSS THE BRIDGE IN HIGH HEELS"**  
**Chadwick**

**BACK TO THE FUTURE**

And what lies ahead in the future for this talented actress now that NBC has elected not to renew V-The Series? "I'd love to do films." Chadwick's ambitions exceed that of just acting though, "I'd like to direct, produce and write. I mean Jessica Lang can read a book and find a part she likes and just go out and make it." Does she have any regrets about the series? "I would like to have had a romantic interest." Despite her voluptuous figure and appealing good looks the writers never elected to give June a love interest in the show. Of course V was an 8 o'clock show, but even Jane Badler had various lovers which included Duncan Regher and Judson Scott. "Jane's the only lucky one," June laughs. The sexual rites of the visitors will continue to be a mystery to us. And what of V's future? "We finished all the episodes for the season with a cliffhanger. I've heard rumors about another miniseries or even a movie. I'd love that. But they're only rumors."

GJ

**ROBERT ENGLUND**  
continued from page 5

Robert Englund is a pleasant man whose devotion for the work he does is only matched by his devotion to his friends. V obviously holds a very special place in his life and it is not surprising that he has already become a popular convention guest making the rounds of science-fiction cons across the country.

**UNFULFILLED POTENTIAL**

Englund believes V's failure can partially be attributed to the show's straying from its roots, even though some of its sounded promising in the beginning. "There were things that didn't work which looked good on paper. The concept of open city, having an earth collaborator - Nathan Bates. That looked great on paper, but what it did was remove the threat of the lizards. Looking back on it, it's easy to be an armchair quarterback. I would have shot the whole thing at night, used that as a mystery, had the city under seige, used the backlot more, turned cars over and put them on fire and had them in the backs of scenes. Really using the concept of this occupied city.

"The major thing was we did not have science-fiction writers on the show. We had good writers, and I like what was done with my character alot, the way it developed. We had writers from the Dukes of Hazzard. What the hell, we were going to race the mothership with the General Lee?"

Englund acknowledges though that eventually the series began to improve and finally started to depict some of the ideas he had originally voiced. It was rewarding, but too late. "I remember one day doing a scene with Terrence Knox, who played the rapist in St. Elsewhere, and myself and Jeff Yagher. We got to work at night and here they've got what they call French Street on the backlot. They've dressed it, boarding up the windows, there's V graffiti, it's nighttime, they're two or three cars overturned and on fire, there's a child's baby carriage with a little wheel spinning on its' side, very Eisenstein [director, Battleship: Potemkin (1925)]. The extras instead of being these gorgeous California blondes that sell real estate are these two real men. I'm acting in the middle of this with Terrence Knox and Jeff and the two of us look at each other after the first take and say, 'Why couldn't it have always been like this?'"

**CAMPING IT UP**

Although Englund preferred the serious approach of the first two miniseries he believes that the camp aspects of the show could have worked in the

shows favor. "Occasionally, even on the series, which I was not as fond of as the miniseries, I would see in exteriors a whole nice storyboarded look to the show. I remember there was one that ended with both Ham and Donovan with their lizard outfits and the sleeves rolled up and Kyle Bates' and they're all out on this horizon line, a lot of foreground, a smoking starfighter over to the right, walking like the Wild Bunch. I like that. I thought it was kind of mock heroic and fun and shot well, and then you contrast that with the character development and the humanity of Willie and Elizabeth and things like that and then the evening prime-



*Diana (Jane Badler) and friend consult on their dinner plans*

time bitch goddesses of both Diana and Lydia. They never seem to get all those elements going at once which was sad. When they did have one outbalance the other it was either too sentimental or it was two bitch goddesses in space or it was just action and then in the family hour where you can't show anyone get hurt."

The mention of Diana, menacingly played by Jane Badler, leads to further speculation by Englund who seems to share the general consensus that the hints of lesbianism and the sadism of the character which

pervaded the series reflected traits inherent in the visitor culture, "I think the lizard appetite is very hedonistic anyway - especially in the ruling class. They hinted at a decadence which was there which I really liked. Unfortunately, the family hour precluded that and it became silly sometimes instead of specific. That was definitely hinted at and played." Some of Englund's favorite moments on the show arose out of the visitors' bizarre sexuality, "My favorite thing they ever did in the show was very subtle, some of Marc's best work when they convert Ham Tyler in the conversion chamber and you see his Vietnamese wife and daughter and Marc's up there like a Viet Cong and he kisses the daughter with the same sexual overture which is great and then you cut to Mike Ironside in agony and I thought that was great. This is the kind of thing Diana would do in her sexual proclivity just like in the episode with the hologram for Donovan, and you would see Diana walk in the room and turn into Julie and Marc's point of view and then you cut back to Lydia seeing Diana in there with Marc and it was very sexual. She was kissing Marc and playing with this human sexual toy. And it was really doubly kinky, almost. I love that type of stuff. I don't love it because I'm a kinky guy, but because it's good and it makes Diana's evil specific instead of evil for evil's sake."

#### THE V REVOLUTION

One of the most surprising changes on V was the dismissal of Blair Tefkin, Michael Wright, Mike Ironside and Mickey Jones midway through the show's first and only season. This "french revolution" or "coup on the set" as Englund calls it shocked many fans. He explains it this way, "What happened with Robin [Blair Tefkin], was that Blair had to replace Dominique after she was murdered which was rough and she couldn't do the same thing and at that time the valley girl persona was very popular so she did her valley girl. She was very funny. She painted herself into a corner with that character because after you have a child you can't keep going around saying, 'Oh god, fer sure, fer sure.' She was sort of trapped and they [the writers] didn't know what to do with her. They had so many other things to solve and I think that's what happened to her character. Now Michael Wright was this hot, black market, young, jiv kid who in the seriousness of the miniseries had to deal with sibling rivalry. Now they take Michael and say he has exploited his black market skills. It's a year after the visitors have been vanquished and he's got this great nightclub. The concept of the nightclub was that we'd set this underground backdrop to reinforce the metaphor. A sort of Casablanca thing. Obvi-





WES CRAVEN'S  
**NIGHTMARE**  
 ON ELM STREET

BY MARK A. ALTMAN

Not since the Evildead has New Line Cinema had such an enormous hit on their hands. Nightmare on Elm Street, a psychological horror thriller, took box-offices by storm in October 1984 and has grossed over \$26 million domestically. The film has skyrocketed to the top of the video rental charts as has the sequel under the directorial auspices of Jack Sholder. Robert Englund, no newcomer to the genre starred as Freddie Kruger, the killer whose life was cut short by the parents of the children of Elm Street who took vengeance on the killer who escaped justice on a techni-

cality. Now Freddie has returned to kill their children -- in their dreams.

Englund has only praise for Wes Craven, director of such noted horror classics as The Hills Have Eyes and Deadly Blessing, "I went in for the interview, I kind of expected Charles Manson or something and I saw this very bright and sweet man sitting there, sort of preppy and we hit it of right away. He has this offbeat, not at all dark or scary, but sort of almost silly sense of humor which keeps it light on the set. He knows exactly what he wants."

The script for Freddie's Revenge incorporates many of the elements Englund originally played on in the first film, "I had put more personality into it then was originally in the release...I don't think it was Wes' fault. It wasn't the domain of a horror movie. They wanted it more abstractly. I was a little disappointed that they played around with his voice on that because there was a little more personality to his voice.

continued on next page

ous, right? Well it was obvious, except they never did it right. The restaurant should have always been closed, chairs on tables, all this kind of stuff. Instead it's bright, it's lit. Again, where's the threat? Where are those lizards? Where are the lizards humiliating a waiter? They painted Michael into a corner too. Michael sits down wearing \$600 suits, they tell him what they're going to do. He's going to change the image for the black audience. This is important to him as an actor, he's a terrific young actor. He's not this oblivious thing that's easy for writers to write, this jive-talking, street black. He is this rather sensitive man. A businessman with responsibilities and he's wearing these beautiful suits. And it's not 'entertaining', they don't know how to develop this character. So Michael's painted into this corner, so they eliminate Michael too. I kind of understand why they might have felt they developed Michael Wright's character wrong. I can understand what happened with Blair Tefkin's character. Why they let Michael Ironside go is absolutely beyond me. It's like psychotic network behavior!"

"There's a stigma about doing television in some circles," says Englund. "But all I ever have to do is say, 'Hell, I'm working with Michael Wright and Michael Ironside, two of the best actors on any coast, anytime and I spent my time acting with them. It is rare where you work in a situation where everyone gets along so much. It's not usually like that, there is usually someone everyone hates.'"



Englund misses V. V was more than just another show to Robert Englund, and the character of Willie will remain with him -- as will his fond memories of the series. "If you ask me one reason why I'm sad about V being dismissed, aside from the fact that I could have probably bought a house next year, the real reason is because I miss my friends." GJ

## NIGHTMARE continued

le was a ghoul and a demon and all these things, but he was also a real man once. It's strange because I thought they had just made me a monster in Nightmare I, but it's almost as though the writer of Nightmare II keyed onto what I was trying to do in Nightmare and sort of ran with that. I'm very happy with the script. Fred manifests himself in a youngster, like a maintou. I get inside this kid and he sort of gets inside me. That's sort of the main plot differentiation, that I get inside him now."

Wes Craven's affinity for unexplicable endings goes unchallenged. Like many of his previous films Nightmare on Elm Street has a baffling and bizarre conclusion, but as Englund reveals, it was not the only one shot. "The original ending was great. It's all over, birds in the soundtrack, spring has sprung. It's all over, everyone has been murdered, mutilated, killed. The car pulls up with the kids and you say to yourself, it's that old Twilight Zone ending, it's just a nightmare - it's all been a dream. Then as the car pulls away the convertible top turns into the same material as Fred's sweater and it clamps down like a mouth over the kids. You see expressions of terror on their faces. It begins to fog up on the street and you see the little victims of Fred from history with the children playing jumprope. The last image you see is the terror on Nancy's face as she sees these ghostly girls playing jumprope. That was the original ending, in the script that I loved. As we worked it began to change. I would lobby for what I thought was best which was that one. Eventually they shot that ending, they shot an ending where the top clamps down and Nancy turns to Johnny who is driving and I'm sitting there. We shot that two different ways, I put my arm around her and just floor the car into oblivion and then another one they shot is the one where I grab the mother and yank her through the door, which I don't like -- but they used."

There were some other shots which didn't make the final cut of which Englund is particularly fond of, "When they killed Amanda Weiss she sees my point of view as I drag her past the ceiling and then she sees my point of view as I drag her past the ceiling and then in intercut you see her being dragged across the ceiling by nothing and then you see what she sees and I had blood on my knives after I slashed her. It was just too frightening to put in at that moment." It would have built that scene up a little too much at that point in the film."

Nightmare on Elm Street is considered, in most circles, the finest horror film of 1984. Robert Englund's contribution is unquestionable and it seems as though we'll be seeing Freddie again...GJ

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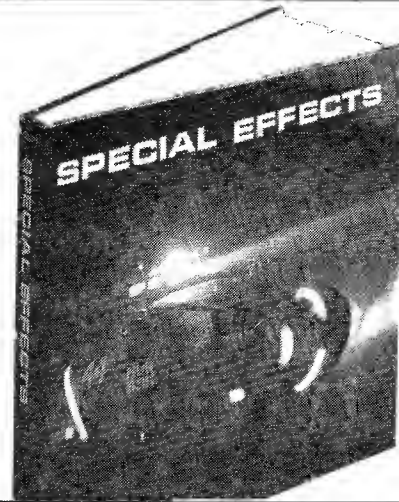
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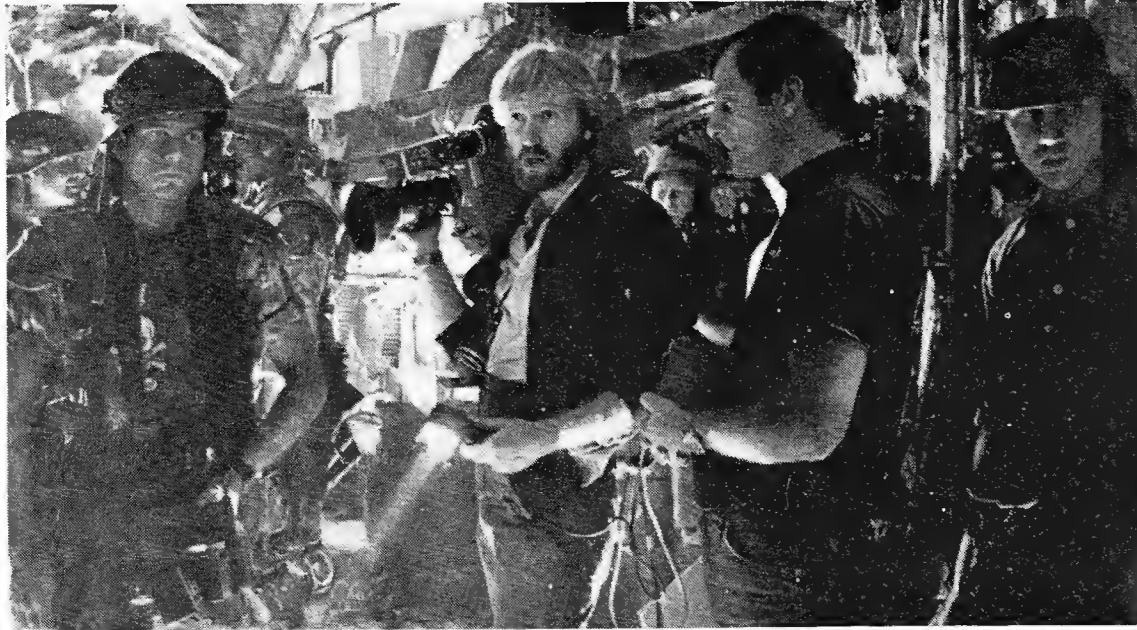
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# JAMES CAMERON & GALE ANNE HURD

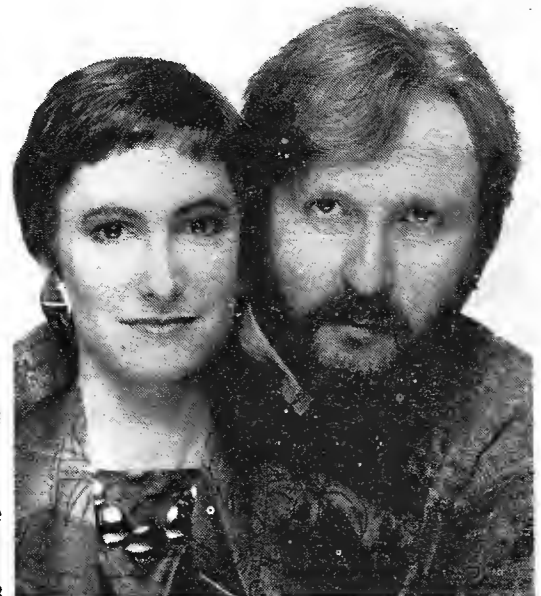


BY MARK A. ALTMAN

In Tobe Hooper's Invaders From Mars Marines may have had "no problems with killing Martians", but in James Cameron's Aliens, aliens definitely have no problems with killing Marines. The \$17 million sequel to the 1978 Ridley Scott classic was written and directed by James Cameron and is produced by Gale Anne Hurd, the same husband and wife team that was responsible for the sleeper hit of the fall of 1984, The Terminator.

Cameron, who is not particularly pleased with Aliens being tagged as Rambo In Space, is quick to point out that his treatment for Aliens which he wrote in four days, was written before he wrote Rambo for Sylvester Stallone which was eventually altered by its star in order to accommodate his right-wing vision of the Vietnam conflict. Cameron's story focused more on the character and the dilemmas he had to face as a man who has been shattered by war. While Cameron does not want to totally disassociate himself from Rambo he does find the ending of the Stallone vehicle "breathtaking in its stupidity."

The fact that a project as complex and ambitious as Aliens could be brought in on an \$18 million budget is a tribute to Hurd's production skills. According to Hurd, one of the ways that she helps keep production costs down is "that we don't ride in a limousine" and a Hurd production does not include many of the excesses of your average Hollywood film. Cameron adds that by housing the special effects at Pinewood Studios in England, where the picture was lensed, they were able to work more expediently, finishing the film in less than a year and also saving money. Another part of Cameron's conservative approach to spending is the employing of people he has previously



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ABOVE: Director Cameron rehearses a scene. RIGHT: Cameron and Gail Anne Hurd.

# MICHAEL BIEHN

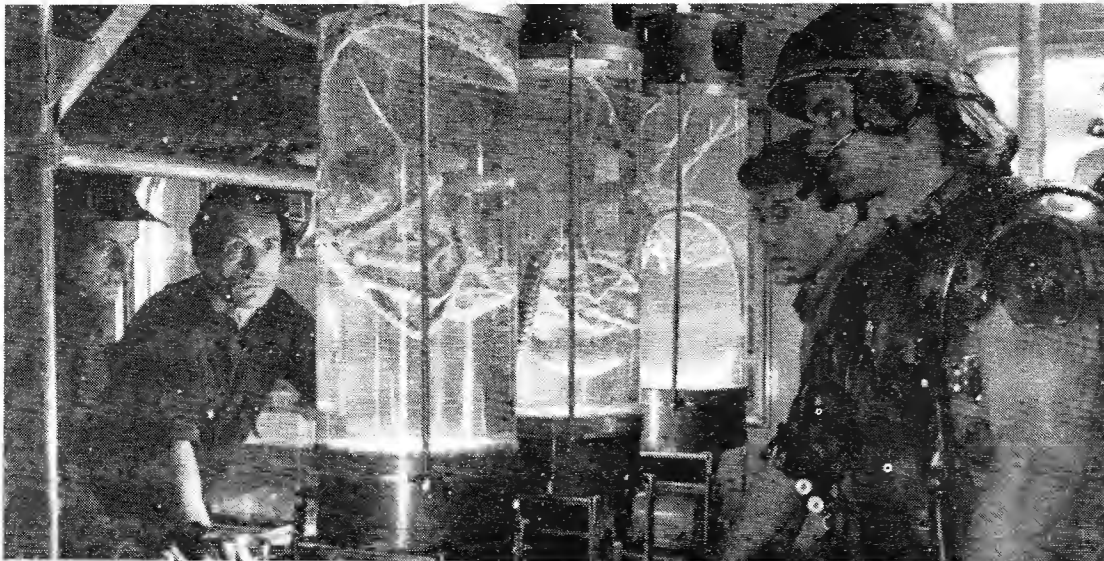
BY STEVEN SIMAK

Michael Biehn has a small problem: it seems that everything in the galaxy wants to kill him. Possibly it's the line of work he's chosen. In Aliens the 29 year old actor plays Marine Corporal Dwayne Hicks who accompanies Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) and company back to Acheron to investigate the sudden silence of the colonists there. "It's really a day in the life of a marine," he said. "Hicks is a kind of Rock of Gibraltar and everybody looks up to him." Biehn, who previously starred as Kyle Reese in The Terminator, expressed great excitement about Aliens but did admit concern that the characters of Reese and Hicks were too similar. "The role that I have in Aliens is not strong for me as an actor. I would rather play a different type of role than Hicks because it was almost like Reese but without the more interesting things about Reese." He added, "He doesn't have a lot of conflicts so from an acting standpoint it wasn't a real stretch for me. But again, I think this movie has a good story with a lot of integrity from an actor's standpoint. It holds up pretty well and I don't think that we're completely overshadowed by aliens."

Biehn read the script several months before production when the film first went into casting. In fact, it was the role of Hudson (played by Bill Paxton) not Hicks, that he had hoped to portray. "I had just done Hicks' role in The Terminator. I was looking for a role that took me over the top and out a little bit. Here was a guy who starts out very, very confident and braggadocious. He was a very funny character and had a lot of funny lines. Then he gets into battle and starts wimping out. Maybe he's a coward and he has to fight that within him - whether he's a coward or not. Then towards the end of the movie he goes out with a blaze of glory. There was a real up and down quality to the character with a lot of conflicts."

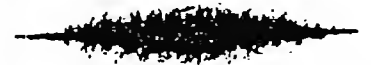
Principal photography began on Aliens with actor James Remar playing Hicks. When Remar left the project the role went to Biehn allowing him little time to prepare for the character. "I got the role on a Friday night. I was in L.A. and I didn't know anything about it and I was shooting on a soundstage in London on Monday morning. It was sort of on the job training as far as the character went." In analyzing the character and the hint of attraction between Hicks and Warrant Officer Ripley, he commented, "I think that Hicks is one of the smarter characters because he'll take a step backward before he takes a step forward. He realizes early on that he's going to need -- they're all going to need -- this woman's experience and expertise. It's just a situation where

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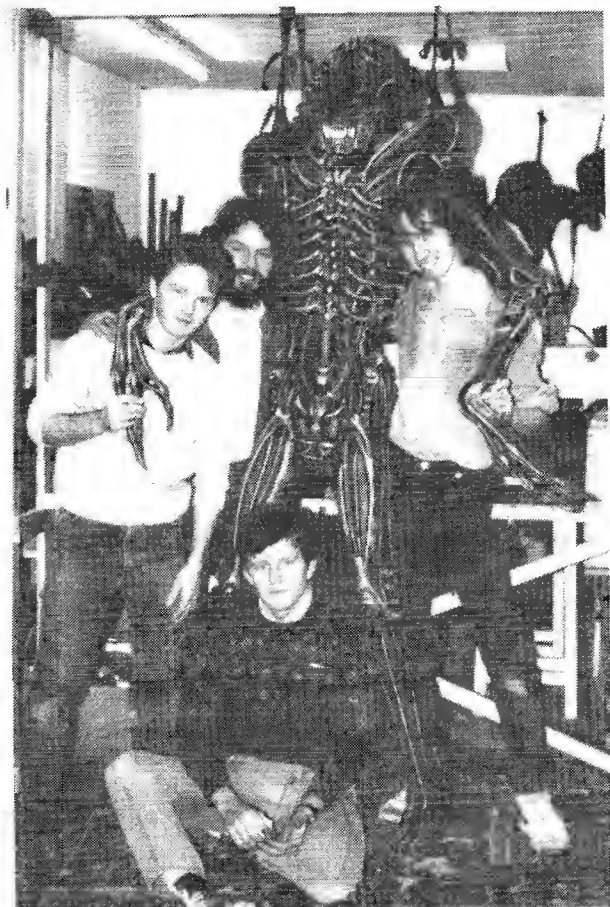
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*Michael Biehn (r.)  
studies the face-  
huggers in the lab*



A L I E N S



## STAN WINSTON

### MAKING CREATURE FEATURES

### THE GOOD, \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ THE BAD AND THE ALIENS

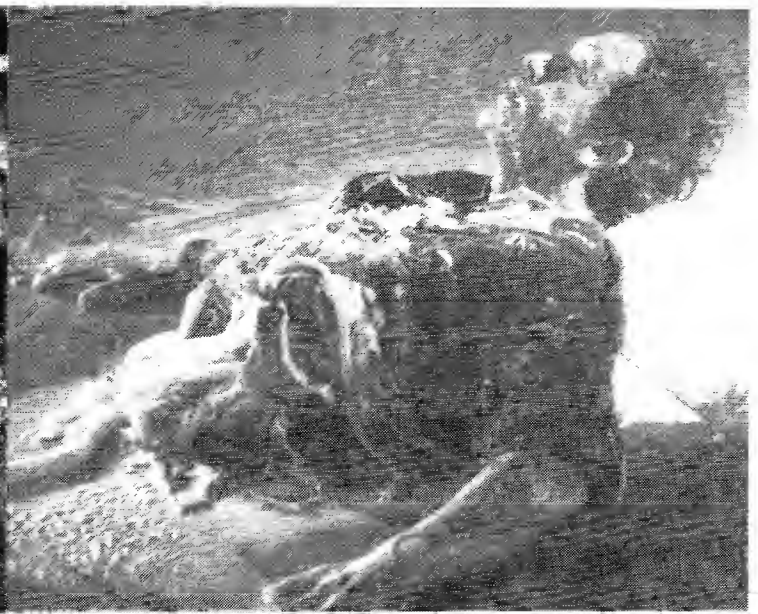
BY STEVEN SIMAK

One can only wonder what kind of toys Stan Winston played with as a child. As an adult he has used his background as an artist and sculptor to create an assortment of unique characters and marvelous beasts. He won Emmys' for his work on both The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman and Gargoyles and was also responsible for the creature effects on such projects as The Terminator, Tobe Hooper's remake of Invaders From Mars and, most recently, Aliens. "For me personally, that which is necessary for any character or creature to work on film is for the audience to somehow relate to what's going on, on the screen," said Winston, who speaks reverently of the classic monsters such as Frankenstein and the Creature From The Black Lagoon who were strong dramatic personalities. "We must maintain, no matter how hideous a monster or how silly a character, certain elements of humanity."

It's evident that the makers of the sequel had a great respect for the original Alien which Winston himself remembers as "the best horror movie of the decade." For this reason, the design concepts for the facehugger, the chestbuster and the warrior aliens remain relatively unchanged. There was, however, a definite attempt to lessen the "man in the suit" quality that became obvious in the final moments of Alien after the creature has been blasted into space by Ripley. "We tried to shoot them and develop them in their designs so that they could move in ways that would not appear to be human movements so that they could be used as stuntmen or dancers on wires." Winston explained, "They could leap from wall to wall in insect-like motions, another of Jim Cameron's concepts. Even though we stayed true to the original movie we tried to give the illusion that they were other than just men in suits by their body language and how they moved."

Winston's approach was to dress the actors for his would-be aliens in Danskins' to which the sculptured bodily pieces of the creatures could be attached. The resulting flexibility of motion makes for some impre-





ssive and frightening moments as the warrior aliens seem to unfold and crawl out of nowhere. Of the 20 suits that were created no more than 6 or 7 were ever used in one shot. "We had back-up suits because they were getting blown up, destroyed and ripped apart. There was an enormous amount of action and an enormous amount of purposeful destruction to aliens."

Returning in a more physical role are the facehuggers, possibly the most disturbing element of the original film. One scene in particular called for Ripley to fend off two of the creatures while trapped in the medical center. In order to execute this complex scene Winston and his crew created about a dozen facehuggers, some articulated, and each designed to perform a specific task creating the illusion that there were only two. "Jim and I discussed how many facehuggers we would need for specific shots, what facehuggers would do and what each had to do. We had scurrying, running facehuggers. We had clawing, gripping facehuggers. We had facehuggers that would crawl over beds. We had stunt facehuggers that were articulated as a human dummy would be. I could say we had leapers, jumpers, scurriers, reachers and grabbers."

Aliens is unique from its predecessor in that it provides a rationale for the human slaughter and an origin for the landscape of pods discovered in the first film. Much to her dismay, Ripley discovers and must do battle with the Queen Alien, a creature as complex as it is frightening. "She was a state of the art, without a doubt," Winston commented. "She uses every vehicle possible for movement and dynamics."

The design for the Queen, which stands upright at an intimidating 14 feet tall, is basically a concept created by James Cameron whose background in special effects proved to be a great help to Winston.

"Although I may read something and it may seem impossible on the page; if it was something that I couldn't work out for myself or with the wonderful minds of my crew then I knew Jim doesn't put it in the written word unless he has some idea of how it's going to work."

In point of fact, it was Cameron who first suggested they use two stuntmen supported by a crane arm and build the Queen around them. "I thought it was absurd," Winston recalled. "But then I had to stop myself and say yep, you know what it will probably work. So we made it work." The body of the Queen in which the stuntmen ride is actually a fiberglass cradle bolted to a thick aluminum frame and supported by the crane arm. The movement up, down, left and right was hydraulically controlled as was the head and neck.

One scene called for the face and jaws of the Queen to fully extend out of the head with complete freedom of movement. This action was cable operated as were the movements of the lips and jaws. "There were two heads. We had one that was used for a great deal of action which was fairly sturdy," said Winston. "Then we had a lighter weight insert head that we used for a lot of the close-up action and that was the head that had the articulated tongue in it that would come out as the extra set of jaws."

The Queen's four arms, two long and two short, were each controlled by one of the arms of the two stuntmen riding in the body, lending what Winston described as more "organic movement" to the creature. "The longer arms were the fully extended arms of the stuntmen who were holding ski-pole like extensions at the elbow of the Queen. That became its' forearm and the hands at the end of that," Winston remarked. Shorter versions of the ski pole extensions were similarly used by the stuntmen to control the smaller appendages. Two sets of the longer arms were actu-

ally constructed for the Queen. One pair was created out of durable polyfoam and the other out of lightweight vacuform, making the latter easily maneuverable for broader shots with the stuntmen inside. Polyfoam was also used to construct the legs which were operated as rod puppets, either externally at the ankles by puppeteers or wired from above as a string puppet.

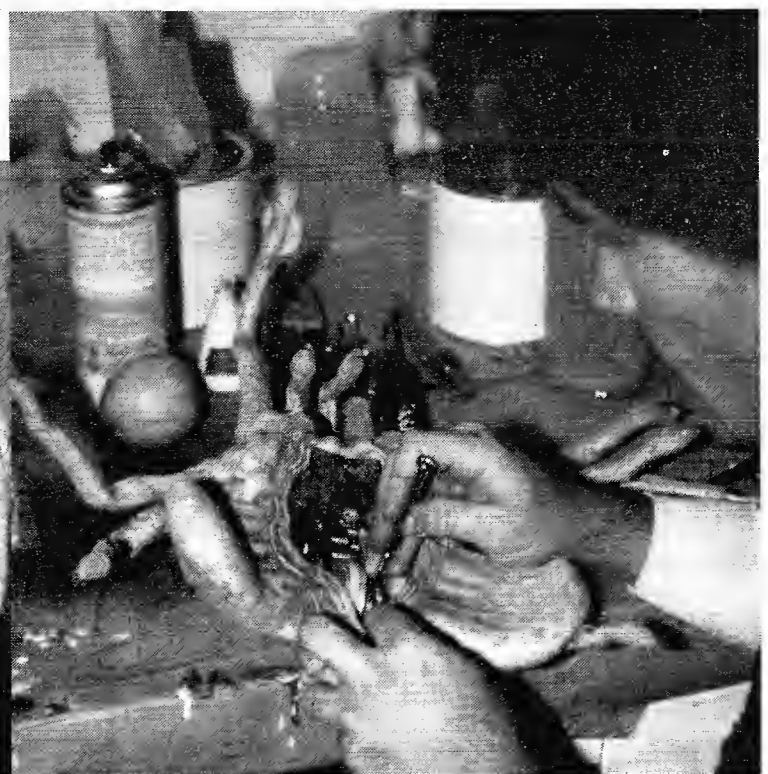
Both large and small mechanical hands were constructed as well and used extensively in the film. One appendage that proved particularly dangerous for Ripley was the tail, the base of which was hydraulically controlled and externally wired for the whipping action.

The Queen Alien is, in and of itself, an impressive piece of technology. But mechanics aside, part of its success is due undoubtedly to the emphasis Winston places on the personality of his creations as mentioned earlier. "If you stop and think about it from an actor's standpoint or a character's standpoint, body language has so much to do with what a person is saying; what the transmission of their thoughts and emotions are. The Queen emotes with a great deal of body language." He adds that the sounds made by the Queen are also ultimately important in understanding her attitude.

Winston's contribution to *Aliens* also includes his work as 2nd Unit Director. Time factors necessitated a constantly changing 2nd-unit schedule creating an enjoyable but hectic experience. "What I would say about all the things that I did direct second unit wise, as with every other aspect of the filmmaking process with Jim Cameron, is that I directed what he wanted to see," said Winston, who described conversations in which Cameron would detail exactly what he wanted the 2nd-unit shots to look like

often providing a quick storyboard or thumbnail sketch for basic framing. "I'm not saying he doesn't want to have your artistic input of your details to emphasize his image or his vision, but you must make sure that the broad stroke, that the vision is there."

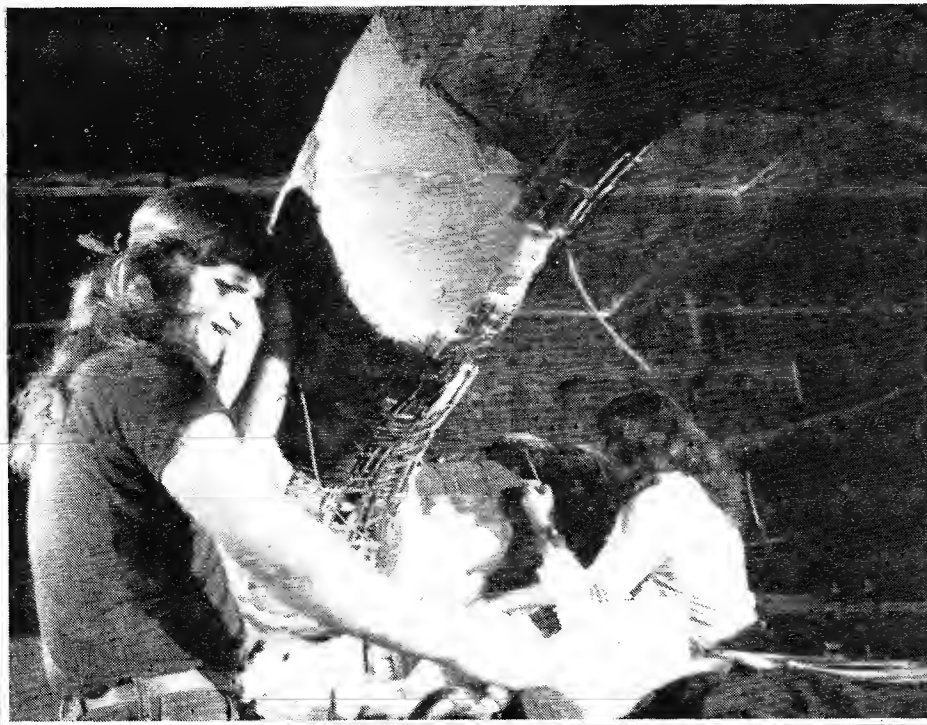
Winston recently completed the effects for an episode of *Amazing Stories* directed by Bob Zemeckis (*Back to the Future*) and is working on an upcoming episode for Tobe Hooper involving the creation of some alien creatures. He has been in development for close to four years with producer Ed Pressman on *Morgoolum*, a project for which he would both direct and do the effects. "The basic thrust of it is, what is the real world? There is an element of fantasy and there is the element of reality and how intertwined and important the combination of imagination, fantasy and reality are. How together they make up what is real." Winston declined to be more specific while the project was still in development but did add that, "It's about people and important aspects of people and how they deal with the problems of the real world which are helped by characters that we would think of as other-world characters." He pointed out that effects are important but are really "icing on the cake", indicating the course his role as director would take. "My emphasis in any of the filmmaking process is that the story is the most important thing. Especially with a person with a background in effects, it's most important to realize that the effects are secondary to the story and the acting and the direction." GJ



LEFT: The dummy of Bishop is prepared for its final confrontation with the Queen. RIGHT: At work on the mechanics of the facehugger

# A L I E N S

## L.A. EFFECTS: Creating The Visual Effects Of ALIENS



LEFT: L.A. Effects crewpeople at work on the derelict ship  
BELOW: Cameron's original sketch of the damaged vessel.



BY STEVEN SIMAK and MARK A. ALTMAN

One would normally associate the familiar names of ILM or Apogee with a project of the scope and prestige of Aliens, James Cameron's sequel to the Ridley Scott masterpiece, yet Director Cameron called upon the services of the L.A. Effects Group to provide almost 150 special visual effects shots for the picture. Aliens impressively showcases the superb work of these visual effects maestros. The companies virtual anonymity in sf circles is suprising considering their involvement with recent genre entries including Jewel of the Nile and Commando and John Landis' An Untitled Movie (Kentucky Fried Movie II) and Hypersapien.

The company which was formed three and a half years ago provided a wide diversity of visual effects for the production and was responsible for all the miniatures, optical, motion control and visual effects work. Originally the firm provided effects for television commercials and has since diversified into motion pictures to considerable success.

Suzanne Benson, line producer for Aliens visual effects, explains the company became involved with th project partially because they already knew Jim Cameron and were also storing some of the miniatures from the original film including the derelict ship. The models which were in "bad condition" were reconstructed for the sequel. One important consideration for choosing a special effects company for cost-conscious producer Gale Anne Hurd was finding a visual effects company that keep costs down while still committing quality work to celluloid. Benson states that L.A. F/X is able to accomplish that efficiency by not sticking to one method, "There are 3 or 4 to 5 different imaginative ways of doing something." By being flexible L.A. Effects is able to accomplish what many other effects firms cannot; extravagant visual effects on an unextravagant budget. Steven Benson, L.A. Effects' president of motion picture production, adds

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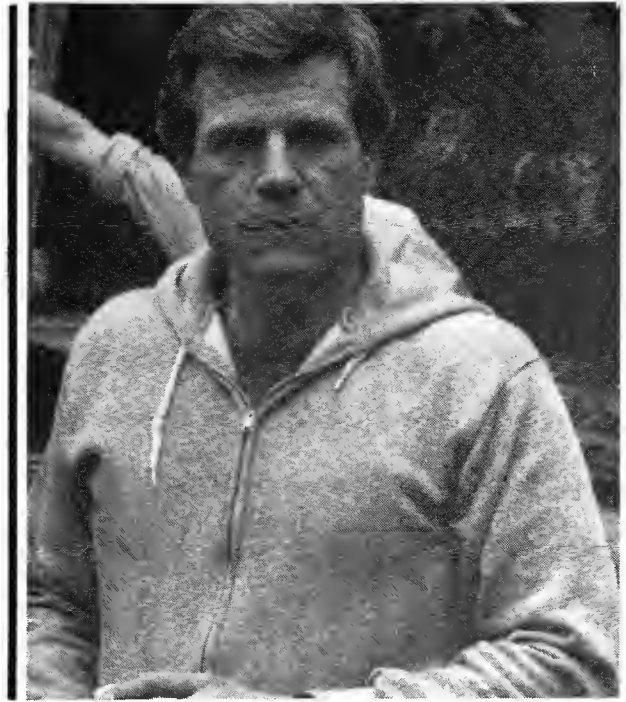


# HOLLAND

Tom Holland, whose first directorial effort, Fright Night, which has been greeted by critical accolades across the country, is the next step in a career which has ranged from acting to screenwriting.

The film, like his screenplay for Richard Franklin's Psycho II, is a unique blend of horror and humor. Holland is an unabashed fan of the genre and was excited to finally get the chance to direct. Taking the accepted vampire mythos, Holland updated it into a contemporary story which may revive this undead subgenre. Speaking in a low, deep voice, Holland quickly betrays his vast knowledge of the cinema and enthusiasm for his first film.

Unlike the undead vampire, the subgenre of the vampire film after a long and prosperous life has slowly died off. Like Lawrence Kasdan's intended revival of the Western with Silverado, Holland harbored similar intentions with Fright Night - pumping new blood into a dead genre. "I just love the AIP/Hammer films from when I was a kid and I wanted to



## FRIGHT NIGHT

Director TOM HOLLAND and Actress AMANDA BEARSE talk about the filming of FRIGHT NIGHT

BY MARK A. ALTMAN

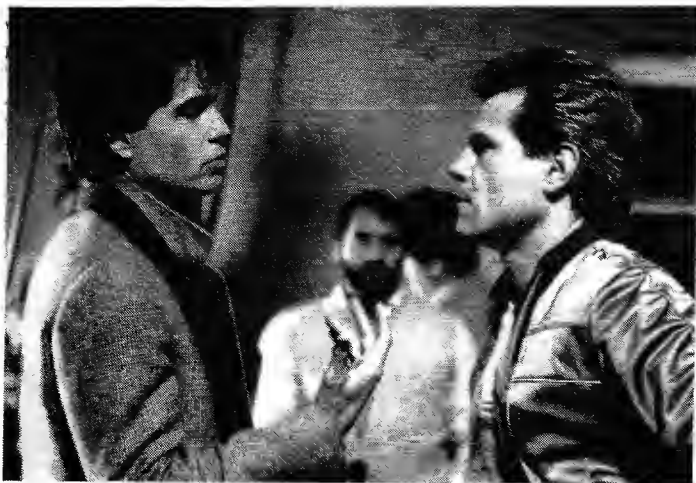
## BEARSE

Many actresses have played both virginal teenagers as well as seductive and cunning temptresses, but few have played both roles in the same movie. Amanda Bearse gets to perform these two characters in Tom Holland's Fright Night.

Amanda has the challenging task of playing Amy, a young and innocent 17 year old girl and a vampire. A beautiful, sensuous and fanged vision into which she is transformed by her boyfriend's sinister neighbor, Jerry Dandrige.

Amanda Bearse has appeared in a wide array of roles ranging from a two year stint as Amanda Cousins on All My Children to New World Pictures' Fraternity Vacation. She's been called upon in Fright Night to play a younger character, not an uncommon chore in her career, "I have been playing very young [roles]. I'm older than the character of Amy. I've been playing in my late teens. I thought, 'uh-oh, this calls for pretty young.' The problem is that they couldn't find an actress who could play the young and also make the transition [to the vampire]. You kind of lose





*Chris Sarandon and Tom Holland*

#### HOLLAND continued

bring that back and nobody had been able to do it. Paradox is usually the last bite of it. The last nail in the coffin was Love At First Bite. I was trying to think of why I used to like them so much and why nobody was doing them anymore and Love At First Bite was what killed it off."

Holland has some very clear and distinct ideas about how this revival should be attempted...and how it shouldn't. "My feeling is that if you're going to do a genre film you could update and play with it, but you had to play within the rules of the genre and if you didn't do that you weren't updating the genre, but you were more ashamed of it than anything else. I did not want to do that. I made a decision to play by the rules."

Holland, unlike many other directors of contemporary horror, believes that suspense and horror should be derived from situations and not from excessive reliance on gore and explicit violence, "My thoughts about that is that blood and gore have always been the last effects of the untalented and when you can't get an audience shocked through other means, through suspense, or jumps, or scares, or even getting involved with the characters than you're just throwing mud all over the place. I really don't think a helluva lot of that." Holland elaborates on his formula for creating suspense, "What I was really doing in Fright Night was a suspense fantasy, more than a horror movie. And by fantasy you had the vampire element, and by suspense you have the first act which is the pencil in the hand scene and then you keep waiting and expecting something more terrible to happen. You just don't do it, you keep them on the end of their seat. Then you have to pay off at the end."

#### MODERNIZING VAMPIRES

He believes that the vampire mythology's long-lasting appeal has a lot to do with the inherent sexuality of the myth, "Well, a vampire is a meta-

#### BEARSE

that virginal quality and get down. There was such a range in the role which maybe I didn't initially see but, of course, Tom saw it and knew it and knew that the actress would have to fit those parts. I got lucky. I'm not afraid [of being typecast], it's where the work is right now. There's not a lot in my age bracket. What's unique about the Amy role is that I did get to lose those qualities and I don't think that gets to happen in a lot of teenage roles."

#### FINDING FRIGHT NIGHT

Ironically, Bearse was cast for Fright Night on the most frightening night of them all. "I was home on Halloween night and I get this phone call at about 8 o'clock, sitting carving a jack o'lantern, and it said, 'Can you come in for a movie called Fright Night?' and I said, 'Wait a minute, is this a joke? Is this a friend of mine? This is too weird!' But that's how it happened and the next day I picked up the script and read it."

She was excited about the screenplay when she received it and was already familiar with some of Holland's previous screen work, "Well it was a fun story and the humor mixed with the horror is always a great touch. I had seen Psycho II and that really struck me. There's a lot of funny stuff in it, taking from Norman Bates. I thought it was great and then when I put two and two together and realized it was Tom who had done that also it made much more sense."



*The innocent Amy encounters sinister Jerry Dandrige*

## HOLLAND continued

phor for seduction and I think that's real interesting. The whole subtext of Fright Night is the sensuality. I think it elevates the genre, makes it a psychological suspense piece on some levels too."

Holland does not feel he was treated unfairly by the MPAA, but was hoping to make Fright Night a PG-13. Watching the final edit he realized that this seemed unfeasible. "When you look at the overall piece, it's emotional intensity that it seems to have on a lot of audiences, it's an R. If I cut anything out it would have hurt it, turned it into a wimp movie. The only people who were disappointed in the film are young teenagers who are looking for a splatter film, but everyone else has been satisfied with it. In a way, it's trying to give them an alternative to serial murders."

### IN SEARCH OF AN AUDIENCE

Nobody at Columbia was sure what they had until the film tested well at screenings, Holland says, but the marketing campaign for Fright Night has accentuated the film's horror elements. Holland disagrees with this marketing strategy, "I was not happy. What they did was they went after the hardcore audience. They didn't let people know it had a lot of humor in it and a lot of fun. All I could do was say, 'No' and they'd say 'Well, we're doing it anyway.' They were afraid because apparently American Werewolf in London, I'm told, didn't make that much money and they tried to market that as humor and horror."

Working with Richard Edlund's Boss Films, who did the effects work on the film was a pleasant experience according to Holland, "We really collaborated well. I've heard people say he was difficult, but I have nothing bad to say about him."

Holland is concerned that the film is not quite as terrifying as his audience may want it, but defends the humor as a necessary ingredient of the film and does not feel it detracts from the tension, but, in fact, helps to intensify it, "The humor came out of the situations. It was never parody. It never winked at the audience or condescends and also the side of humor in Fright Night is the humor and terror intermixed because there's nothing worse than having somebody invalidate you or make you look ridiculous by poking fun at you. What happens in the cop scene is very funny because Billy, the helper, is making fun of Charlie, making it impossible for the cop to believe him and it makes Charlie's situation even worse. The flipside of a lot of the humor in Fright Night is this growing terror. That kind of stuff I love - out of the situation. If it comments on the film or the filmmaker poking fun at it or saying look, I don't believe this anymore than you do, I

## BEARSE continued

Her experience on the set was rewarding and the shoot was a pleasant one, "Generally it was wonderful. We were lucky to have a two week rehearsal period before we started filming which is great for actors because when you get into a movie as technical as Fright Night the actors kind of take a backseat. You have to know what you're doing so the director doesn't have to worry about you. It's a small cast and that's a joy."

### SEXY LADYTHING

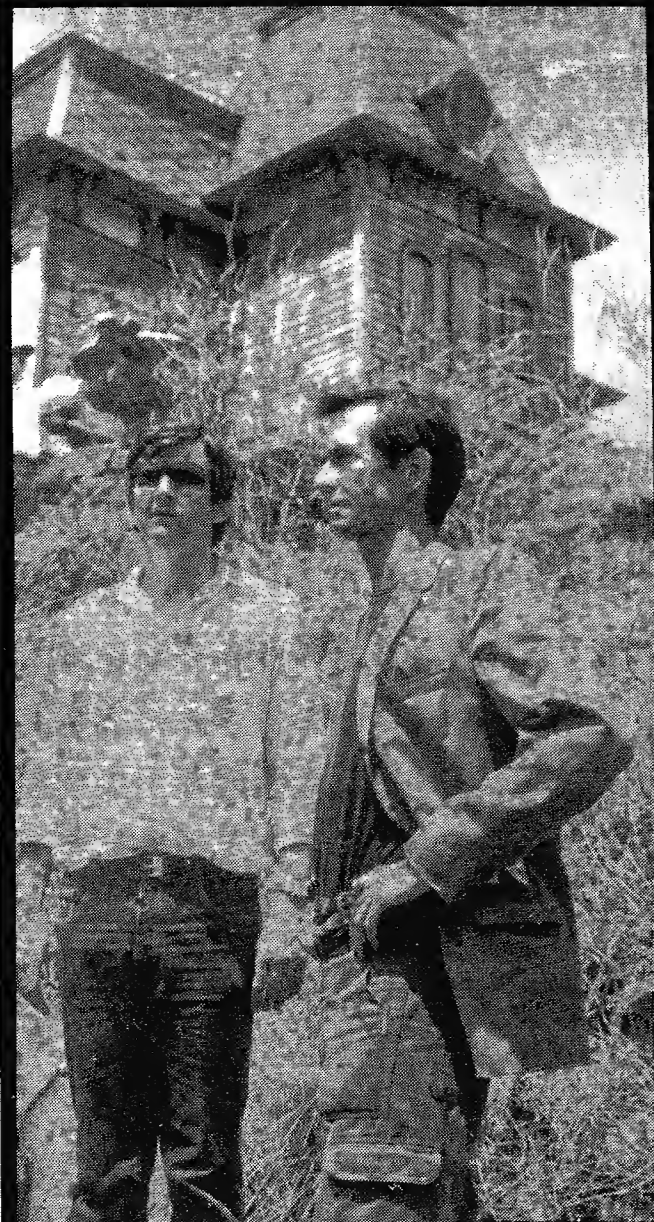
The characters dual nature is totally antithetical, however Amanda does share some characteristics of both. Which did she prefer to play? "I would say the grown-up one. I feel a little more free because when you're playing younger than you are what you have to do is lose, not that I'm Miss Sophisticated, some of that worldly and sophistication that you gain from life experience and you have to adapt a kind of naivete. So when I could lose that and bring more of myself to the character, which probably happens on the disco floor initially. In watching the film, that's what I appreciate about Fright Night."

The film has been criticized in certain circles for its humor element. The movie blends both comedy and horror into a unique formula which Bearse feels works to the film's advantage, "Tom has been criticized somewhat that he can't make up his mind what kind of movie he's making. Is it a parody or a horror movie? I don't think that's it at all. He's brought fun to what can be a very chilling experience. You get an element of that, but it's not totally. I knew what to anticipate in terms of the horror so, of course, I wasn't as reeled in as a general audience member would be. I happen to like the humor breaking the tension of the horror. I think in terms of a crossover audience the humor makes it easier for more people to go see it."

When discussing the horror genre it seems as though sex and violence are naturally synonymous. The current crop of horror film is generally extremely explicit in both its' depiction of violence and sex. Bearse feels that although both are important ingredients for the success of the film, they were not overplayed, "I don't think it was that explicit. In fact, I didn't even take my clothes off and with the exception of one girl nude from the waist up that's pretty harmless in this day and age. I like the sexual undertone, because I think that vampires are very sexy and they're very sensual and I think that's part of their charisma, that people are drawn to in terms

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think that's bad."

One question that has plagued fans of the film is who or what was the mysterious Billy Cole. Holland explains, "Billy Cole is a mortal man kept under control by Jerry as his servant because Jerry is offering him the promise of immortality and Jerry is feeding him enough of his blood to give him long life, but not enough to turn him into a full vampire. He's the Renfield character updated."

#### MAKING THE FILM

On a low budget and a tight schedule Holland knew every second was precious and feels that his experiences on other films was an asset to him in directing his first film, "I learned a lot from my experiences on Psycho II. We didn't have any effects [in that] though. What I did on this one is I boarded it out with my own boards and then went to Richard and he told me what was technically possible and what we could afford. The budget was around eight million, which for a major is not very much money. I think Richard's effects, I'm not sure, were eight hundred, nine hundred thousand dollars. We didn't screw around. We only had one shot."

With all these constraints Holland found that it was an absolute necessity to storyboard everything in order to avoid any problems that could arise from a lack of good planning. "The film has three visual setpieces and all those are so carefully interlocked that you can't really set up a set and then say what am I going to do next. I'm not talking about [storyboarding] acting scenes, where you have talking heads, that's working with actors. I was an actor for years and I have a fair amount of experience. I think I'm pretty good with that, I'm very comfortable with that."

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Director Richard Franklin and Anthony Perkins confer on the set of Psycho II (ABOVE). Peter Vincent comes face to fang with fright (RIGHT).

# GEORGE A. Romero

## GEORGE ROMERO PROVES YOU CAN'T KEEP A DEAD MAN DOWN

BY STEVEN SIMAK

A helicopter cautiously glides over a barren Florida city, landing somewhere in the distance. A slight breeze blows a newspaper headline: THE DEAD WALK! into view. A figure moves and turns to face the audience revealing grotesque, half-eaten remains. Other creatures gather as the credits roll on George A. Romero's Day of the Dead.

Day of the Dead marks the third installment of Romero's now famous "Dead" series which has created dungeons of terror and splat out of seemingly innocent locations as a farmhouse, a shopping mall, and, probably the most inherently frightening of the three, an underground mine. Romero's approach to the creation of horror in these films is simple, "It's very hard for me to get serious with it. I think the kind of films that really prey on your innermost fears are rare and concepts for those kinds of things are few and far between. Night of the Living Dead preyed more on inner fears, I think, than Dawn of the Dead or Day of the Dead because the imagery was more nightmarish. The zombies kept coming out of the dark and they just kept increasing in number.

"But Dawn of the Dead and Day of the Dead are much more frivolous. Dawn of the Dead is, to me, overtly comic. Day of the Dead is a little darker than Dawn and may be a little more accessible in the sense that it has



**DAY  
OF THE  
DEAD**

a stronger storyline. We're going to be, hopefully, more involved with the characters and there are more characters and I think we're more involved with their particular panic."

Romero contrasts the threat of inner fears with the threat to the security in our suburban world which he preyed upon in Martin.

"Here was a character that we couldn't define just like maybe a hundred characters we might see on a city street. Yet we were frightened of him...I think he's not a vampire at all...I made up my mind that he was just a psychotic and yet he was a very sympathetic guy and he was like a vampire in that sense too. He was a misunderstood character with a lot of yearnings to be normal, to be close with people.

"Martin was just an idea that had kind of shuffled in, the problems that a traditional vampire has with the problems of someone trying to live in this messed up world we have now."

The "Dead" series has been embraced and criticized for its almost revolutionary use of gore and violence as a tool of horror. Romero quickly points out that these films are in the tradition of Grand Guignol, the attraction for himself and the audience being: "Man did you see that!" That's what it is and I think it should be appreciated. Part of what's revolutionary about these films is trying to make you sick," he laughs. "An audi-

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Dan O'Bannon is well known among enthusiasts of the genre as the master screenwriter responsible for Dark Star, Alien and Blue Thunder. For Return of the Living Dead O'Bannon has taken on the dual role of both screenwriter and director. It seems appropriate that O'Bannon, infamous for his criticisms of other directors who he feels have misinterpreted his work, should have the opportunity to control his own, personal vision from the first word to the final frame.

"As a screenwriter you can't really communicate your style to a film. Writing a screenplay doesn't do it because it still remains to be interpreted by a director. A screenplay is at best a pale blueprint that can never be any more than that and so nothing written by someone and directed by another can have the style of the writer."

Although associated most closely with the genre of science fiction and horror, O'Bannon's earliest works dealt with historical and contemporary human drama but were written at a time when such projects



## THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

weren't in

demand.

"Finally one day the sanguine coincidence occurred that I wrote an outer space movie at the same moment that Hollywood decided to start making them. That was Alien and they grabbed it. Subsequent to that, of course, all the offers I got were in that area and I took them in order to build up a career as quickly as possible so that I could get the chance to direct. And now I would like to sampe around just a little bit more."

Childhood enthusiasm for the genre gave O'Bannon an advantage in screenwriting for science fiction and horror. "I understood the genre and that was one of the reasons I wrote in it," he said. But O'Bannon's ultimate goals were in direction to which he saw screenwriting as a vehicle. He began writing for Hollywood, gathering an impressive list of credits and experience behind him, before he accepted his first directorial assignment. Of the risk of what is essentially the beginning of a new career, he commented, "I'm a much better director than I am a writer and on top of that I can protect my writing. Everything that I've ever written has been to one extent or another mutilated as a piece of writing. Even the brilliantly directed Alien was directed from a script which had been pre-mutilated. So everything will be better now, no risk. The risk is in being born, I mean, what can I say? No risk, no it was difficult as hell but not a risk. Now its all fallen into my hands. Everything will be better now. Nothing will be worse."

# DAN O'Bannon

BY STEVEN SIMAK

## DAN O'BANNON DISCUSSES HIS FIRST DIRECTORIAL OUTING



As one might expect, the outspoken O'Bannon has very definite ideas about contemporary directors and direction. It would seem obvious that in order to understand and properly direct a screenplay, one has to have an acute and deep understanding of the work. Although O'Bannon sees this as a necessity, he is quick to point out that this is not always the case. "Most directors don't do this with a script," he said. "They give it a cursory read and thunder out there onto the set. They try to make a film based on a superficial understanding of the script. And if you do that, naturally, it's going to be difficult to interpret that script with any accuracy.

"I do believe that probably other directors have a great deal of difficulty understanding what my scripts really mean. They think they understand, but they don't. That's why I've pretty much given up the idea of having directors direct themselves. I don't think that they can grasp it. They think they do because there's an obvious level on which all my scripts are understandable. But beyond the obvious level I think all the rest is very unobvious and enough to keep not having somebody else tackle it again.

"Directors are not trained to adequately interpret scripts. They're just not trained that way. They may have been at one time, I wasn't there in old Hollywood. They're trained to invent their own vision. The script is given to them as a kind of a prop or a crutch so that it can enable them to make a schedule to decide what sets they need to build on what day and what kind of people they have to cast. Most directors are not literate, they're visual stylists. They're not good readers. They are not experienced in drama or theater. Contemporary directors come out of a visual or commercial or MTV or photography backgrounds. Their orient-

ation is visual. So they're neither equipped nor do they make an attempt to genuinely film a script they have been given. It's simply a springboard for them to interpret. The auteur theory also promotes this, that the director is the author. And so they either depart willingly or they depart because they can't do any better."

### THE LIVING DEAD WALK AGAIN

O'Bannon first brought into Return of the Living Dead to contemporize John Russo's original script for director Tobe Hooper. When production was delayed due to financial problems, Hooper dropped out to direct Lifeforce (then titled Space Vampires) and producer Tom Fox approached O'Bannon to direct the film.

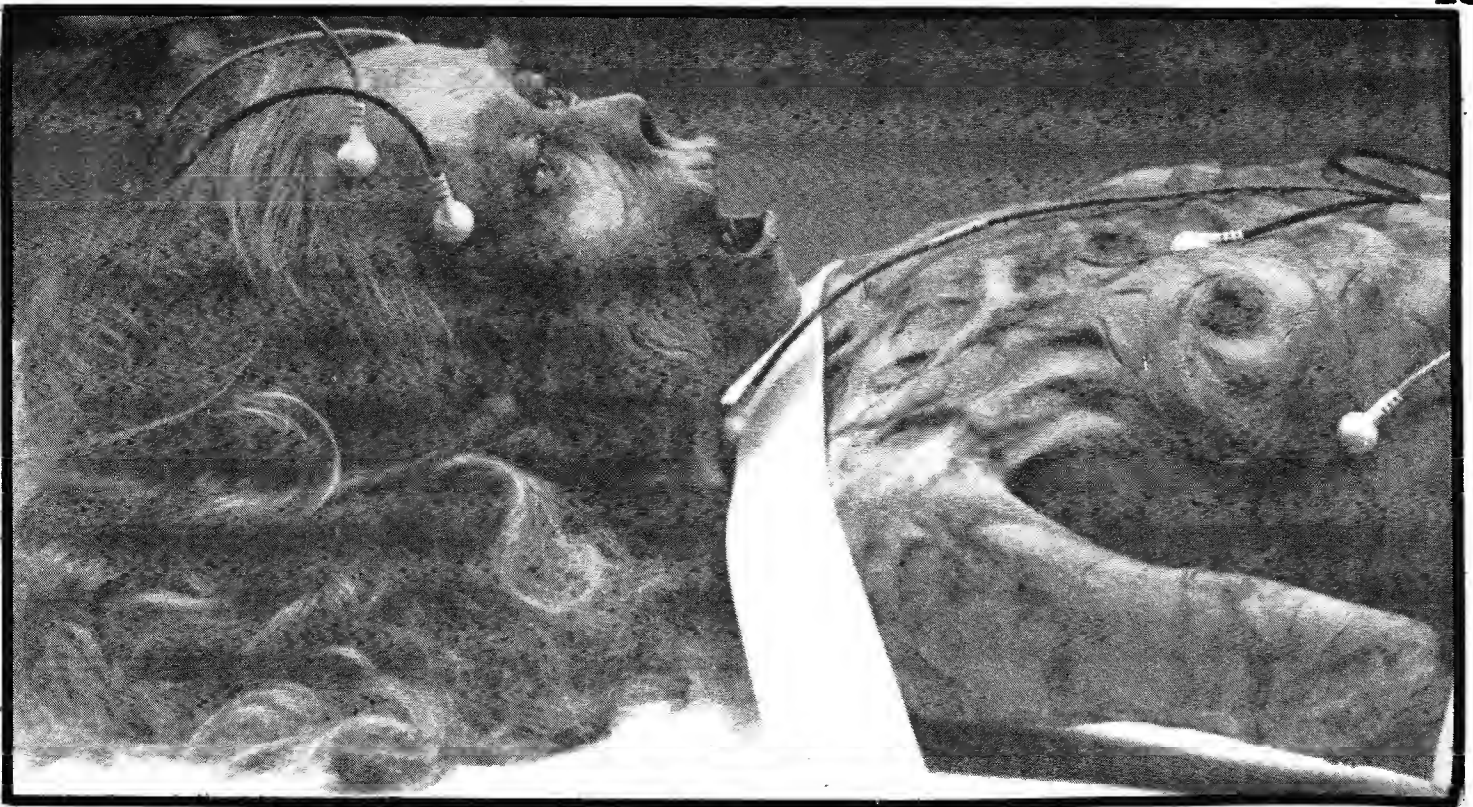
"[It's] what Tom Holland has described as an entry level job. That is to say that after fifteen years it was the first directing [project] that actually was seriously offered to me and I took it."

Return of the Living Dead provided for some unusual challenges for O'Bannon. The association of George Romero with Night of the Living Dead and the "Dead" legacy would invite the invariable comparisons which can be difficult for even seasoned directors to face. For this reason O'Bannon strove to make his film a unique entity, which he describes as a horror/comedy that's different because it's partly a parody of horror films and partly a horror film itself.

"The difficulties in trying to sequelize Romero's film when he's doing his own sequel (Day of the Dead), that meant that I had to be as different as I could. I certainly didn't want to try and work on Romero's turf because that's his area, he's an expert at it, and he's making his own picture. So it would've been folly. I looked at specifics that I could find



Marines have no qualms about killing Martians in Invaders from Mars



*A victim of the Space Girl lies drained of her Lifeforce*

about how he handles his 'ghouls', he calls them, and I tried to do it differently. If Romero's moved slowly I made them move quickly. If Romero's don't speak I had them speak.

"Actually, some of Romero's ghouls movie quite quickly, that's true, but they tend not to speak so I decided to make my intelligent. A lot of it was simply attempting to be different from what Romero had done and what other people had done."

#### GORE IN FILM

George Romero's "Dead" trilogy is infamous for its use of gore and violence to highlight the story. Although these elements do exist in Return of the Living Dead they work on a different level, emphasizing the comic aspects of the story. Regarding the current debate over the need for excessive sex, violence and gore to create suspense and horror, O'Bannon commented, "Sex, I don't know. Gore and violence, obviously, bodily damage, injury and death are certainly the primary source of fear in anything. Even films like the Invasion of the Body Snatchers, which appear to be more philosophical, do involve the destruction of your real body and the replacement of it by a false body. Needless to say, mutilation and death are very essential to every horror story that's ever been written.

"In the last 20 years this violence has become more explicit but that's pretty unavoidable because of the way the world has changed. Gore, you know,

after you've seen John F. Kennedy get his brains blown out in front of the nation it becomes, well, it becomes very difficult to take seriously older horror movies in which that kind of stuff is not even depicted. The reasons that movies are more violent today is because the world is more violent and if you're going to frighten somebody it has to be at least as frightening as the world around them. So I don't, per se, have anything against gore and violence in horror movies, it's necessary."

#### EVALUATING LIVING DEAD

Most people will find that O'Bannon's been remarkable in his efforts. With the exception of an ending that some may find a disappointment, the film takes advantage of the inherent comic elements in the zombie myth. From a clever reference to the events at a Pittsburgh farmhouse to zombies who are smart enough to order second helpings the film is as blackly comic as it is witty and frightening.

"On the most basic level it was everything I had hoped for because my hopes had become very, very simple. My hopes were to simply have a film with my name on it as director and on that level I have certainly succeeded spectacularly. There is a movie with my name on it as director. Beyond that I was very cautious about having higher hopes because I was aware that what I was going into was a difficult and compromised project, under budgeted, and made by people who don't understand the motion picture industry very

well. I saw this would be a troubled production to direct especially as a first time director with not enough credibility to throw his weight around.

"It's pretty good as a film, as a work of art, it's pretty darn successful, actually, within the limitations that it set out to be which is an exploitation comedy/horror movie. It works pretty darn well. Better than it might have given the restrictions that I was working under. In terms of process, meaning how much time do you enjoy your job while doing it on a day to day basis, it was a flat out failure. It was a very unpleasant experience making the film."

#### THE PROBLEMS OF RAISING THE DEAD

Although he found working with the cast and art departments a rewarding collaboration, O'Bannon commented that anymore experienced director would have left the project. "They wouldn't have tolerated that kind of abuse," he said. "But I hung in because I had to get that credit. I wouldn't have tolerated it on a second picture, but I needed a demo reel so I tolerated the behavior."

Bill Munns, a prosthetics and special make-up expert whose credits include Swamp Thing, The Beastmaster and Brainstorm, left the project after the creation of some 20 complete bodies and 70 zombie heads due to creative differences. O'Bannon, who in our interview expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of Munns' work on the film, then hired Kenny Myers and Tony Gardner, a protege of Rick Baker, to "salvage" and redo the zombie effects that he felt needed to be reshot.

#### NUDE VAMPIRES FROM SPACE

One of O'Bannon's recent forays into the science fiction/horror field was the screenplay for Lifeforce, based on the novel by Colin Wilson. "Adapting the novel was kind of fun because he had an ingenious concept and a terrific opening sequence and set of characters but a scrambled plot," he said. "So for me it was sort of like a picture puzzle, take all those elements so they'll become a plot."

O'Bannon also co-wrote the screenplay for Tobe Hooper's Invaders From Mars which underwent a total rewrite although both O'Bannon and co-writer Dan Jakoby were awarded screen credit by the Writers Guild. "They always want to do something else with it. They never want to do what you write," says O'Bannon of Cannon Films latest fiasco in the science-fiction field.

O'Bannon admits to being stigmatized as a 'sci-fi' writer and adds that it's harder to write about "actual human beings" than "making drama out of an intervening threat." He hopes to diversify his wr-

iting from the genre which has been his livelihood, "I'd better do a wild departure because my credibility as a writer among the critical community is very low. I'm regarded as being someone who cannot write for beans. I think in order for them to take me seriously at all it had better be a very large departure. I don't think the critics will be able to view my writing objectively if they have some kind of brown, familiar science fiction work they keep seeing. Critics are like anyone else, they quickly typecast anyone. If you do a picture which is science-fiction which has lousy character writing and your next picture is a science-fiction with a good character, I'm not sure they'll perceive that. I think they set their opinions immediately just like we do of anybody, first impression.

"You never change their first impression. You have to tie somebody to the floor and sit with them for months before they change their first impression. No one readily alters the first impression. But I think in order to be taken seriously I'll have to change so much that I seem to be a different person. So they can't even use their first impression."



Irregardless of the form or period in which his work takes place, there are certain qualities which will always be inherently O'Bannesque. "I like the public. I make films for the public. When I'm writing, when I'm making a film I always make it in my mind's eye that there's an audience sitting, watching. I am not a personal filmmaker who works for an audience of one, for himself. And so I will be very happy if you like this film and I will feel very bad, like a personal failure, if you don't." GJ



# BIEHN

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you have a woman that's very strong and dependable. Hicks realizes that and respects her for it.

"It's kind of an interesting thing. A lot of times they'll put romance and love scenes in movies because they say we need it. Every movie has to have a love scene and they'll shoot a love scene after the movies over and stick it in. This movie if it had something like it would be idiotic. What you have is two characters that just kind of like each other and I think it works out pretty well."

Aliens marks Biehn's second collaboration with James Cameron, who also directed The Terminator. He feels a great respect for Cameron both as a director and an artist and had been hoping to work with him again. "I believe that Jim did a great job with Aliens because he made a different type of film" said Biehn. "I think that the original and the sequel are really films that you can't compare to one another."

**"I THINK THAT HICKS IS ONE OF THE SMARTER CHARACTERS IN THE FILM BECAUSE HE'LL TAKE A STEP BACKWARDS BEFORE HE TAKES A STEP FORWARD..."**

**BIEHN**

"I've always said that Jim could do just about everybody's job better than they could do it, except for acting, he's not a very good actor," he explained, when asked what it was like working with Cameron who has been described as an auteur. "He's not somebody who won't give you any freedom, I think it's a misnomer to think that Jim just does everybody's job for them. Jim writes the stuff and is very aware of being a set designer and art director. He's very aware of what other people are doing. He'll work collaboratively with you and if you come up with an idea that's better than what he thinks or he wants then he'll go with it."

"The thing about Jim is that he came up through the Roger Corman film school and he hasn't had that much contact with actors themselves. He writes the stuff and he knows the results when he sees it. It's just the process of working with actors that I don't think he is completely confident with right now. He hasn't worked that much with actors but his instincts are right. I think that once he spends more time working with actors he'll gain more confidence in understanding the process of acting."

Biehn responded to a recent article in CINEFANTASTIQUE (July 1986) which reported that the "artistic temperament" of Sigourney Weaver had caused

difficulties throughout the shoot. "I'm not the kind of person who stands up for an actress that's a bitch to work with. I would never do it, I've worked with them before. This is entirely not true about Sigourney. It was kind of a difficult shoot because of what went on and there were difficult times on the set involving the English crews and the American actors and director. I don't think that the English crews were as used to working as hard as we were. I'm not sure what they said in the magazine but I don't think that there was strife on the film. Sigourney couldn't have been more professional." Biehn added, "Sigourney is a strong woman who stands up for what she believes in as far as in the acting choices she makes. Her and Jim discussed these things and I'm sure that at times they didn't agree on everything but I can not ever think of once when either Sigourney or Jim raised their voice."

The actor related one anecdote involving Sigourney Weaver and the enormous amount of sweat that abounds in the film. "They put sweat on you and sometimes your working and you're actually sweating yourself," he said, describing the scene they were about to shoot in which the aliens fall through the ceiling of the operations room. "Somebody was saying that we needed sweat on Sigourney and somebody else was saying no, no, Sigourney's got enough sweat. The make-up person was this proper Englishwoman and she said, 'Women don't sweat, they glisten.' and Sigourney kind of looked her over, cocked an eyebrow and said 'Yeah, well I'm glistening like a pig!'"

For Biehn, motivating himself to perform and react alongside special effects was not as difficult as one might think. "It's just using your imagination with aliens. It's not what it really is; it's just a piece of plastic." He added that in both The Terminator and Aliens he wasn't actually doing scenes with the creatures as, for example, in a film like E.T. A situation like that, he explained, would prove much more difficult from an acting point standpoint. "I've either got a shotgun out and I'm putting down rounds or I'm turning the other direction and hauling ass!"

Having played the villain for most of his career in such projects as The Lords of Discipline and Deadly Intentions, Biehn enjoyed his recent excursions under the white hat. He admits, however, to still being attracted to the bad guy in the roles he chooses. "They usually have such strong conflicts," he explained. "They're usually going up against the world and they feel so strongly about why they're doing what they're doing. I enjoy playing those roles more." And perhaps, after battling a deadly terminator and a horde of aliens, going up against the world wouldn't be so bad. GJ



## MICHAEL J. FOX

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

BY SEBASTIANO CASSINELLI  
PAIEWONSKY

Michael J. Fox was born in Vancouver, Canada, a long way from Hollywood, U.S.A. Eventually though he would find himself playing Alex P. Keaton on the popular television comedy, "Family Ties". It wasn't until the release of Back to the Future though that Michael J. Fox became a household word. The film about Marty McFly's comic encounters in his parents past was a box-office smash and its creators are currently working on a sequel. Fox also starred last summer in Teen Wolf. Fox will soon be seen in Paul Schrader's Around the Corner To The Light of Day .

GJ: HOW DID YOU GET THE ROLE OF MARTY MCFLY IN BACK TO THE FUTURE?

MF: Well, Steven Spielberg and Bob Zemeckis are both fans of Family Ties and they watch it all the time. When they needed someone for the role of Marty they just said well let's get Alex of Family Ties. So they went to my producer and talked about it. They finally worked it out with him and he told me about it. The next thing I knew I found myself doing Back to the Future.

GJ: SO THEY REALLY DIDN'T AUDITION YOU FOR THE PART?

MF: I didn't. They auditioned a bunch of actors and they even shot for about six weeks with another actor, Eric Stoltz. [He] is quite good, I think they just didn't get what they wanted.

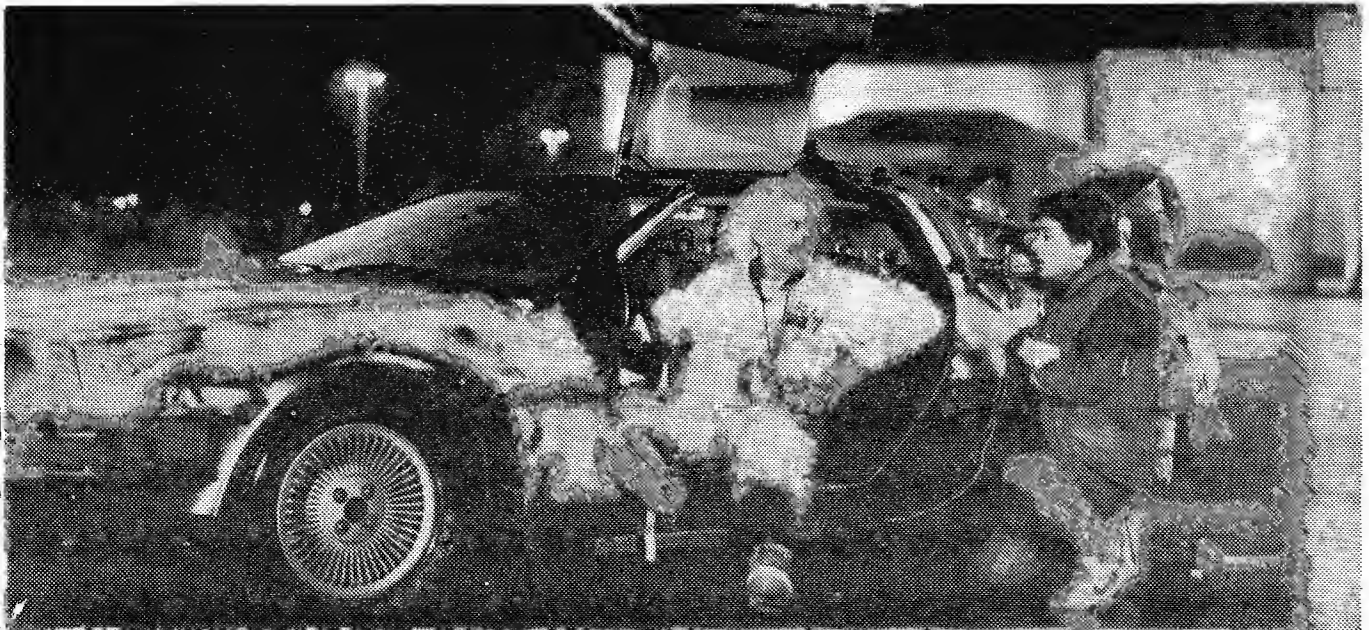
GJ: DID YOU HAVE TO PREPARE FOR THE PART AT ALL?

MF: I really didn't have anytime to. Fortunately, there were enough things about

Steven's since USC film school. They're both like kids. They like to make movies that entertain themselves. And if they're entertained, then they're happy. And they're pretty sure that everyone else will be entertained. They like fast paced movies, but both of them like alot of heart. Essentially, even though it's a quiet movie about people and relationships, about patience and understanding.

GJ: MARTY GOES BACK TO 1955 AND HIS MOTHER FALLS IN LOVE WITH HIM. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN AN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION.

MF: Yes, it was perfect. It was a very easy moment to play. If you just think about sitting on a bed with your mother while she goes for your underwear. Marty has a certain amount of self-control, demeanor that he likes to stay in. And this kind of tested that. He was trying to remain cool; that's kind of the rule of the 80's - to remain cool and calm. And this kind of put him on the edge of that. Playing restrained panic is one of the most fun things for an actor to do.



Marty that I could already find in myself.

GJ: HOW DID YOU WORK WITH ROBERT ZEMECKIS. DID HE TELL YOU WHAT TO DO?

MF: In general ways. He would give me general notes. He is such an enthusiastic guy, such a motivator. You're so inspired by his energy and enthusiasm. He wanted to keep the whole thing at a certain pace. To him you just keep moving. He doesn't like pauses, spaces, or gaps.

GJ: THERE IS WHERE YOU FEEL THE INFLUENCE OF SPIELBERG STRONGLY. MOST OF HIS MOVIES ARE LIKE THAT.

MF: Yes, Bob has been kind of a protege of

GJ: SPIELBERG AND ZEMECKIS ARE VERY AMERICAN IN THAT THEY PLAY OUT THE AMERICAN DREAM IN THEIR MOVIES.

MF: It's television. They make movies for the television generation. We have a million more influences than our parents or grandparents because we have this box. It's a big upper hand. There are alot of areas that filmmakers can satisfy or touch upon or relate to and so they take advantage of that and fill as many of those senses as they can.

GJ: MANY EUROPEANS INVOLVED WITH THE CINEMA FEEL THAT IN GENERAL MOVIES PRODUCED IN AMERICA ARE

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THE LIFE AND  
DEATH OF

# POLTERGEIST II

## THE OTHER SIDE

BY CARSON DYLE



Scotland, 1960: A teacher observes a hinged desk-top fly open as a little girl tries diligently to restrain it; later, the teacher sees a desk behind the girl levitating a few inches above the floor. A minister visiting the girl's home watches a linen chest float through the air, hearing loud rapping sounds that are later recorded there by two medical doctors.

Germany, 1968: The so-called Rosenheim poltergeist, which obligingly makes its actions visible on film, leads to an intensive investigation by two physicists from the renowned Max Planck Institute who conclude that "these phenomena are not explainable by the means available to theoretical physics."

United States, 1982: Tobe Hooper's Poltergeist is released and is one of the summer's most success-

ful films.

\* \* \* \* \*

When it was announced that MGM would be making a sequel to the 1982 hit Poltergeist many fans of the original wondered why do a sequel. The obvious answer is that the commercial potential of the Poltergeist story had not been fully exploited. However, Poltergeist screenwriter Michael Grais (and Mark Victor) is quick to point out "This is not an ordinary sequel, but a continuation of the first film. We've tried to go a little deeper with Poltergeist II, through themes which are more spiritual and mystical." Grais says the project's genesis is that "friends told us they wanted to see a new film." He adds that "We were interested in continuing the story of the original characters."

"Our decision to write the script around the same family was a gamble," explains Mark Victor. JoBeth, Craig, the kids and Zelda were not under contract to do a sequel." Freddie Fields, the film's executive producer noted that "Our initial risk was to write the script around the same family instead of pursuing a storyline centered on a new set of characters. Since we didn't have the cast in hand, we wanted the story to work for everyone, so that the original cast would want to come back."

"We sat down with Craig, and we talked with JoBeth and the rest to see what their interests were," continues Victor. "Beyond that, we tried to get an emotional feel for what they felt their characters might be going. I think those meetings fed a lot of things into the script that helped the cast feel they were a part of their characters, and consequently drew them toward wanting to do the film itself."

Two members of the first film's creative team would not be involved with the sequel. Steven Spielberg opted not to do the new project and Tobe Hooper was unavailable due to his commitments with Cannon Films so Fields, Grais and Victor shared the responsibility for selecting a director for the film. "We took meetings with several directors," says Fields. "I had met Brian [Gibson] a year earlier about the possibility of another project and was quite impressed with his work to

date. He came in very well prepared, having read the script; his ideas were very enthusiastic. And in fact, he has given Poltergeist II exactly the added dimensions we were looking for."

Brian Gibson, whose film Breaking Glass opened in the United States in 1983, was excited about the opportunity to direct the Poltergeist sequel, "I began thinking about everything we had talked about, and it just suddenly struck me that this was really a film I wanted to make." One of Gibson's more inspired casting choices was the late Julian Beck as Reverend Kane. Michael Grais called it "a classic performance of evil. This movie, if it's not remembered for anything else, will be remembered for Julian's performance. It's chilling."

Principal photography on Poltergeist II included ten weeks of work at the studio, and approximately three weeks on three separate locations: a housing development in Encino, California which represented the Cuesta Verde area; a private residence in Altadena, California which became the Phoenix home of Gramma Jess; and Spider Rock in Canyon DeChelly National Park in Arizona, which served as the setting of the mysterious "power spot" seen in the film's opening sequence.

Visual effects work on Poltergeist II was done at the Marina Del Rey, California headquarters of Richard Edlund's Boss Film Company, where more than one hundred technicians contributed what Edlund describes as "virtuoso work, pure and simple" to the project.

Edlund, who founded Industrial Light and Magic for George Lucas, has worked on projects ranging from Star Wars to Poltergeist and since founding his own company, Boss has done the special optical effects work for Ghostbusters, 2010 and Fright Night. The task of topping his superb work for Poltergeist was a difficult challenge, "There are two basic ways to scare an audience. One is the startling effect -- Jack Nicholson smashing an axe through a door in 'The Shining', for example, has an immediate and frightening impact. The other type of ear is accompanied by creating a creepy feeling that puts the audience on edge at first. Through lighting, mood, and many other things, you create a mental soup to which you add ingredients slowly and carefully. You build up to a certain point and the drama that's been built by the director takes over and makes the effects work. The effects are the tail of the whip in the drama."

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*Those mischeivous poltergeists from the other side wreak havoc on the Freelings' toaster in a scene eventually excised from the final cut*

BEARSE

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of it being a monster because it's not Frankenstein or a mummy or somebody who is funny looking. He can be very charming and that's how he gets his victims. I like the way Tom dealt with that. I think it was done very tastefully even in the bite scene which is totally symbolic of penetration being a virgin and I like the way it wasn't heavy-handed. I appreciate, as an audience member, being given a little intelligence and let my imagination [run free]."

### LIKE A VIRGIN...TO A VAMPIRE

Once Amy begins her metamorphosis Amanda Bearse became introduced to a new phase of filmmaking which she had previously been uninvolved with, special effects. She has only praise for the make-up technicians at Richard Edlund's facility, "Those guys were brilliant and it was amazing to go over to Boss films and see that part of the industry. It was fascinating. Ken Diaz, who was one of the make-up artists, is probably one of the most dedicated people I've ever met in any part of the business. He was first on the set, last to leave. I think it really shows in his work."

The first time that Bearse was able to screen the film was at a cast screening upon the film's completion. It was particularly thrilling for her since she hadn't seen any dailies during the shoot, "It was Tom's decision [not to screen dailies] and it was fine with me because 1) I think they can influence you whether your aware of it or not and 2) Because it's a special effects movie there are so many elements you can't see until post-production and I wanted the thrill of seeing the whole thing completed."

After seeing the final cut, she's seen the film twice since, "The second time I saw it was at the industry screening which is a very judgemental prove-it audience and they had a good time. That was very encouraging. And then me, Tom, Chris, Bill Ragsdale, Roddy [McDowall] and some friends of ours all took up one row in the Hollywood Theater and that was a real kick to see it with real people and to hear them scream and talk back to the screen and just go through the experience. That was the best one."

### SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

One of the film's more appealing aspects is the sympathy the film elicits for the vampire, Jerry Dandrige, Bearse believes. "I think people are very drawn to Jerry Dandrige. Chris Sarandon did an excellent job, he's a hunky guy. When I heard that he was cast I was so thrilled because I've been a fan of his since Dog Day Afternoon. He

was subtle and I think it's very enticing because you have a lot of people in the audience rooting for the bad guy. I think that Chris found a lot of pathos in his character. For instance, when he finally dies, he's calling Amy. I think there's some sympathy to be found there. The pencil in the hand scene where he gives Charlie a choice and says, 'That's more than I ever had.' is really nice, to show that even though he's got eternal life he may not be so happy."

Comparing Fright Night to the plethora of films currently littering the genre, Bearse has some ideas about what makes Fright Night a more entertaining and interesting picture, "As an actor it has a lot of truth. The humor, the pathos, come out of the humanity and the reality of the situation. I think that's what makes it superior. I've seen Friday the 13th, Part I, II, III, etc. and all the other ones, Halloween and some other cheesier horror movies. What frustrates me in those situations is that the people have a limited intelligence and when they insist on walking in some place that you know they shouldn't be, you feel like screaming out, 'You're so stupid!' After a while you don't care whether they get hurt or killed because they deserve it, they're so stupid. I don't think you feel that in Fright Night."

### OTHER FRIGHT NIGHTS

Unlike director Tom Holland, Bearse is not totally displeased with the recent genre offerings featuring vampires, "I saw The Hunger and I liked it. I have been influenced by Tom and he knows a great deal about the genre that I did not know. I enjoyed it because I think Susan Sarandon is a real strong actress and the idea of having the lead vampire a woman was very interesting. I agree with Tom that it doesn't own up to what it is. They never once mention that it's a vampire film so to him, and perhaps he's influenced me a little bit, it's embarrassed of the genre and if you're going to do that kind of movie you should be proud of it which I think is what Tom is doing."

And if a sequel were to be made, Bearse notes, she would be more than happy to participate and has some of her own ideas about what she would like to see happen, "We've lost Chris unless you can find some hook and we've supposedly lost Evil, but with the tag they put on that becomes questionable. This was all news to us. I would, of course, like to have seen Amy and Charlie have grown up a little bit, maybe in their last years of college. Something happens that, perhaps, I become the bad guy. I did get pretty far in my transformation."

And what is this talented actress looking forward to after having played a number of such young roles, "I'd like to grow up a little bit." GJ





*Blood spills by the gallons in Romero's cult classic Dawn of the Dead*

## GEORGE ROMERO

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ence that's friendly to it and can dig it and get off on it will have a good time. It's fun, I mean it's part of what we're trying to do, to be amazing with the effects and be as gross as we possibly can."

### WHY THE DEAD WALKED

In addition to that aspect, many have examined the films as an allegory to the creation of a new society to rule the earth; the extinction of the human race on a grand scale via evolution and this new threat. The reasons for the zombie uprising, after all, were never fully explained in the film. Information regarding radiation from a Venus probe was used during a television news sequence in Night of the Living Dead but this, according to Romero, was merely expository material designed to illustrate the fact that no one knew what was really going on. "It was one of three explanations (the two others concerned pollution and a virus) in the original script for that film. The other two got cut out when Walter Reed picked up the film for distribution. We had to cut it down closer to ninety minutes where ever possible. So that was never intended as the definitive explanation although some people have written that it was."

Although Romero sees the possible allegories as being important, they are not his main goal in the direction of these films.

"It's not important, in a sense. I think that all it does is indicate to friendly viewers that there's some thought behind it and that the allegory is there if you want to find it. If you want to look at it from that standpoint it is about society's reaction to a revolution in a sense. And yes, that's there, but to me the primary element of all three films is the surface. They're

rollercoaster rides and I'm most concerned about the surface when I'm making the film and I'm more concerned about the allegory when I'm writing it. What seems to be adding to the [Zombie] problem is human kinds unwillingness to pull together and to try and face the problem with some kind of sanity. That seems to be, I think, partly what all three films have been about...in addition to this growing problem with zombies,"he laughs. "There is a lack of communication and they're filled with ironies. If the people in the films would just talk to each other and be able to pull it together instead of being such at odds with each other."

### POP ART

What is important to Romero, who views each of the films as a "pop-culture piece" is that the surface reflect the pop-culture at any given moment. "If you look at the three films they do, I hope, reflect the times that they were made in. In 1968 we were all angrier and Night of the Living Dead is probably the darkest of the three films and the most pessimistic. Dawn of the Dead is the most slapstick and bawdy. The shopping mall in the 70's, we were all sort of just dancing, you know, having a good time again. It was a pretty frivolous time. Day of the Dead is almost like a video. It is alot like a video. I think the surface is very important. Its' life comes from surface texture."

It's these elements that separate, Romero feels, his "Dead" series from the imitations and common crop of slasher/gore flicks.

"I think that my films are inherently different from the slasher films. They're not like Friday the 13th at all. Those films generally have some sexual content. I've been careful to avoid it in the context of the zombie films. Just simply because I don't want any interpretation about what it's about.

"All they [the slasher films] are, are sort of Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover or something," he laughs. "They seem to be for the most part about how can we pull off these murders. Now you could say that's Grand Guignol too. That's what traditional Grand Guignol is, just setting up a thin scenario so you can do the effect and chop people's heads off, stick shishkebobs through their throats or anything else. But that's all that is. Whereas I think that at least my zombie films have something else. They do have some societal allegory that you can hang your hat on and I think that they're probably a little more fun. They're a little more gothic, they're a little more outrageous, they're a little more comic and they're just openly more fun."

### ENDING THE TRILOGY

Originally, Day of the Dead was to represent the conclusion of the "Dead" series on a grand scale. "I had a script that literally was the end of the story," Romero said. "It ended and the dead stopped coming back to life." The script, written by Romero over two years ago, dealt with zombie armies now under human control engaging in combat. The scenario came out of the short story Romero had written for Night of the Living Dead.

"When I first wrote the short story, part three of the trilogy was literally just a paragraph and it all happened at the farmhouse. In the final paragraph of the story the army comes over the hill and looks like another human army only it turned out to be an army of zombies that was being in fact controlled by a small human faction that had survived and had managed to dominate even this new and revolutionary society. That was the denouement of the original story."



"The Crate" creature from Creepshow

Preproduction had already begun on Romero's original script when a hard budget came in and it was discovered that the film would cost close to seven million dollars to produce. UFD, who has a three picture deal with Romero including Dawn of the Dead and Day of the Dead, agreed to finance the film, but only under certain conditions.

"They said, 'Okay, we'll support that. But you have to, for that amount of money, deliver an R rated picture. Or, we will spend 3 to 3½ million and you do what was originally intended, which was to make a picture which we'll distribute without a rating.'"

Romero then went back and rewrote his script, scaling it down to focus on the beginnings of human control over the zombies, incarnate in the character of "Bub." Possibly Romero's only dissatisfaction with the third film is that it is not the grand finale to the trilogy that he had wanted. A fourth film, he feels, is unlikely. "I don't think it'll ever be made until there's a change in the ratings system. Because this film is unrated it's not in the same ballpark as an E.T. or as a film that comes out and has a rating and has 1500 prints on the same night and has a shot at really making 200 million dollars. This film can't do that. This film can do very well. In the theaters that play it, it can do very high numbers. But it'll never play in enough theaters. It just can't lay across the country in the same kind of context that a rated film can. So as successful as this film is, I don't think that it can ever break the bank at Monte Carlo and therefore no one is going to break their mold or break policy to make another one, to make an expensive one that will be allowed to go out without a rating. There's a pure economic, mathematical chart that says you can spend so much money on an unrated film because it's too risky."

Although Romero admits to sometimes being frustrated by the close-mindedness of critics and academicians who often look down on horror as an art form, Romero radiates a constant vitality for the horror genre he so skillfully manipulates. "I've always loved it and I think I have a kind of affinity and understanding for it and I've just always loved it. I've been able to make a Knightriders every once and a while and so I think that if it were entirely up to me I just wouldn't make horror films. I want to make movies. But I love it, I'm happy. I don't feel stuck in it. That's because I love doing it."

Romero is looking forward to Pet Sematary, his next film and an adaptation of the Stephen King novel whose ending he calls "bittersweet. I mean it's really tragic, it's hideous. What are they going to be, the Munsters? But I think there's sort of a gothic tragic air to that ending which is lovely." Romero most recently served as a private filmmaking advisor to Stephen King on his first directorial effort, Maximum Overdrive, his film adaptation of the story Trucks. GJ

## L.A. EFFECTS: THE SFX OF ALIENS

continued from page 17

that "proper planning" and trying to have effects interact, as much as possible, with live action contributes to the high quality at low cost formula.

In order to accommodate Aliens intense shooting schedule, L.A. Effects was forced to set up temporary facilities at Pinewood Studios in England. "Going to a foreign country created a little skepticism," says Steve Benson. "You're not able to take your in-house crew, but only your supervisors and you have to go over and form another company utilizing a foreign crew, American supervisors and being able to take very limited equipment with you." Despite their trepidations both Suzanne and Steven Benson concur that the foreign crews did marvelous work and that their final results were extraordinary.

One of the films most powerful shots is that which accompanies the movies opening credits, where the Narcissus escape pod was discovered adrift by a salvage vessel. Alan Markowitz, who was responsible for overseeing opticals and motion control work on the production, explains that the Narcissus was built by Jay Roth in Los Angeles and shipped to London. The initial idea was to situate the ship in a cold environment adding to the serenity of the shot. He reveals that in order to attain the maximum quality of the image the shots were "virtually all done in camera bipack" using Vistavision since they did not want "to lose quality through optical compositing." The bipack camera is equipped with a twin set of magazines and is able to run two strips simultaneously. Through the use of bipack composite various elements can be combined using mattes with latent images. "The composite that you see is all first generation," Markowitz adds. To execute the shot and achieve the utmost quality color latent images of the Narcissus were shot on a computer controlled camera rig enabling L.A. Effects to shoot a separate matte pass. Then the background was added over the latents with the mattes inserted in the camera.

The colony complex, the films' largest miniature, measured roughly 100' by 70'. It is within this complex that the majority of Aliens action and special visual effects work takes place. When the Marines first enter a cavern within the complex searching for survivors a hanging miniature was utilized and flawlessly blended into the final shot. The hanging miniature is suspended between the lens of the camera and the full size set duplicating the atmospheric condition on the live set within the miniature. While Markowitz acknowledges the fact the term hanging miniature was used freely on the production, he adds the technique was often utilized for expedience sake. There are scenes within the colony complex where both rear and front projection were used as well as forced perspective miniatures. "Every possible technique towards special visual effects was used on this film," stresses Steven Benson.

One of the most exciting visual effects involved the dropship vehicle designed by Ron Cobb. The dropship which was designed by Ron Cobb who utilized earlier sketches by Syd Mead and James Cameron. The dropship was built in 1/12 and 1/50 scale. The largest version of the craft measured 5 1/2' long x 2 1/2' wide without the missile pods being deployed. In order to shoot the dropship sequences, background plates were shot first on the stages with the large scale miniature; the smokey environment with cranes and dollies. Then the foreground dropship was shot on a motion control system to be finally composited with the other atmospheric conditions which the ship would have to react to. "There's a lot of electrical arcing that went on during the destruction of the AP station during the dropship going over," said Markowitz. "As much as we tried to maintain first generation quality with the entire composite we also maintained first generation quality with the actual plates themselves." In order for each element to look their best electrical arcing was introduced when possible onto the background plate on first generation. Some composites were done in the camera bipack. "It is a good cheat when you are dealing with space shots," Markowitz states.

In order to accomplish the difficult dropship explosion dummy dropships were constructed without the interior electrical components that the main dropship had. About seven were constructed and had to fly across the live action stage and then with precise timing hit the ground, explode, topple over and summersault forward and explode again. The effect was created for a front projection process plate utilized for live action. A distinct type of rolling action was required, with the explosion literally helping to rotate ship, which complicated the shot since the vessel was required to roll "like a rolling pin" and it often went in other directions than the one which the crew was attempting to shoot. "The rolling action that was required [in that shot] probably gave us the most trouble on that one sequence," says Steven Benson.

Some of the most exciting and innovative visual effects work was utilized in the motion pictures climatic moments. The AP Station interior miniature was over 30 feet high requiring immense pyrotechnic work.

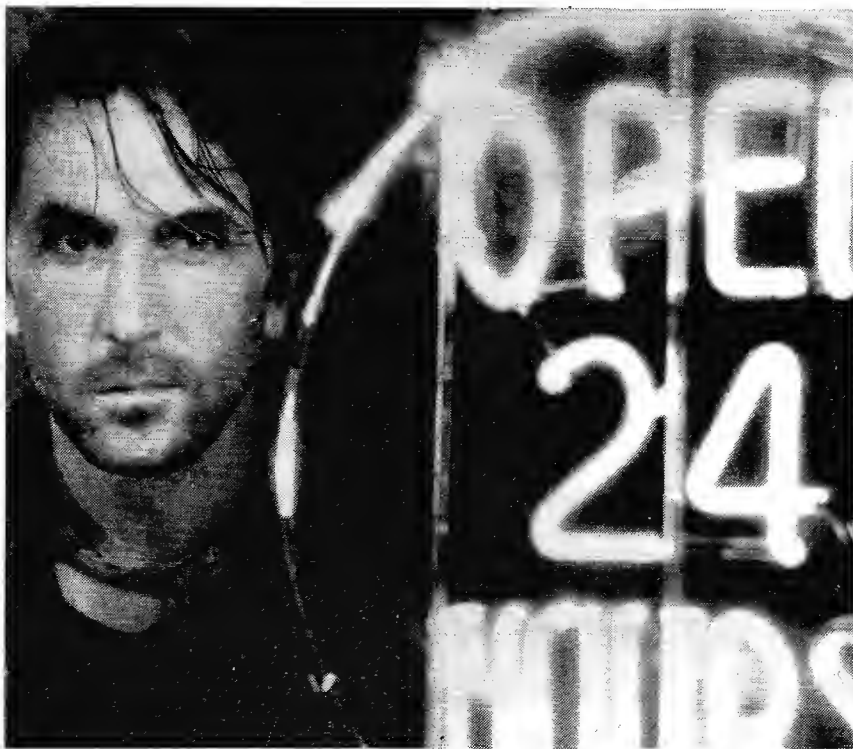
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# WILLIAM FRIEDKIN

## EXORCISING HIS DIRECTORIAL SKILL IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE

BY MARK A. ALTMAN



The 1985 fall television season heralded the return of the anthology series and perhaps none of them were more eagerly anticipated than the revival of the Twilight Zone on CBS. Twilight Zone, like NBC's Amazing Stories, has employed a number of revered film directors to craft some of the episodes. Twilight Zone has featured the work of Joe Dante (Gremlins), John Milius (Red Dawn), Wes Craven (Nightmare On Elm Street) and William Friedkin whose films include The French Connection, The Night They Raided Minsky's, The Exorcist and most recently Deal of the Century and To Live And Die In L.A.

Friedkin, an Academy Award winning director, was excited about the chance to work for television. "The fellow who produces the Twilight Zone is a man Phil DeGuerre and sometime ago he sent me a letter saying that he got into the film business because of the film I made called Sorcerer and then he heard me give a lecture nearby and he said now I am producing the Twilight Zone and I think we have some good scripts by the leading writers in the genre; Ray Bradbury, Stephen King, Harlan Ellison, Arthur Clarke. He sent me a batch of them and said I know you wouldn't do any television but if you like any of these scripts please feel free and come in and do it and you will have as much autonomy as you would on a feature. I started to read the scripts. I thought they were very good and I liked in particular one he had written called "Nightcrawlers" which I thought was a really powerful, intense piece about the effect of the Vietnamese War on a particular guy within the context of a horror film. It really

seemed to me like a good choice for the Twilight Zone and then it was only 20 minutes and it was an opportunity to work in short form which no longer exists.

"You're a writer and you write novels and say you can't write short stories and get them published it would be very frustrating to you. The same is true of filmmaking, there's no market for short films at all. The only way to make short films now is episodic television and so I liked the script, it was a chance to work on a short film. I really had a great experience with it and it was not only a chance to make a short film, but be seen by 30 or 40 million people, not just be run at some film festival at Telluride or something for 47 people."

Despite Friedkin's recent television work on Twilight Zone, Friedkin has little esteem for the medium, "Let's face it. There's 30 or 40 million people for anything you do and yet I think most of what I see on television is obscene. It presents a false vision of America. Not only to Americans, but to the rest of the world. It presents a vision of superheros and heroines. Two women running around in a policecar who clean up the whole town every week and are never in danger and who always solve their personal problems and live happily ever after...with cancer. Or a show like Father Knows Best, which I remember from my youth, where father really didn't know best.

"Television, week after week, presents an obscene and distorted view of American life as I've observed it having lived and travelled

# FRIEDKIN

in many parts of this country and I think television is the real enemy. I think it is an opium for the eyes and desensitizes the American public and conditioned a whole audience to expect happy endings and superheros and be disappointed when they don't get them. They market test everything - the least offensive thing gets on the air. I directed 2000 programs before I ever did a feature film."

"Film audience today are ahead of most filmmakers," says Friedkin of contemporary motion picture viewers. "I think that often, they instinctively know what the next shot is before it comes onto the screen. My feeling is that moviegoers don't have to understand everything intellectually -- there is much they only have to react to viscerally. The audience views a motion picture as a series of icons -- faces of actors, incidents, a gun, a knife, a flash of sunlight on a road, a sunset, a woman's walk, a fast moving object, a shadow, a glimmer of light -- tight pieces of unrelated information crossing the screen. If these are skillfully combined in a impressioni-

stic way, the audience will make its own film. There must be a beginning, a middle and an end, but scenes do not have to have ends. In The Exorcist and The French Connection particularly. I strove to knit the sequences together, so that the audience would sense the flow of the story without being conscious of where each scene started and ended."

The films of William Friedkin have prominently feature both sex and violence. Even "Nightcrawlers", Friedkin's Twilight Zone episode, was quite graphic in its depiction of violence. Friedkin says what intrigues him about these two subjects are the same things that fascinated Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky. "What draws people to fact or fiction are people who are in highly charged situations and generally the best dramatic films, whether it be Eleni or Death Wish, deal with people in life or death situations. Very few people in an audience would admit that they identify with Richard the III. Yet most people would find Richard the III fascinating...and I must confess, I do." GJ



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## CAMERON & HURD

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worked with, according to Cameron, to use people "who have something to prove", but he is also spared surprises by knowing what to expect from the people he is working with. Among those who services Cameron called upon again were Robert and Dennis Skotak of L.A. Effects Company [see separate article] with whom he worked on Battle Beyond The Stars and Galaxy of Terror while working for New World Pictures and Stan Winston whose superb work was showcased in The Terminator [see separate article]. One Cameron alumnus with whom Cameron was not entirely satisfied with was James Horner, who scored the film in three weeks between other projects. "I'm sure James Horner was not too pleased with it," says Cameron of the completed score which was substantially altered during the editing process from Horner's original score and even includes musical cues from Jerry Goldsmith's original Alien score. One of the reasons, according to Hurd, that veteran composer Goldsmith didn't score the sequel was "because he wasn't available at all."

A person whose work Cameron was happy with though was Sigourney Weaver who, as both Cameron and Hurd insist, was a pleasure to work with. Hurd called an article on Aliens printed in CINEFANTAST-



Promotional art for Piranha II

IQUE Magazine, which reported that Weaver and Cameron did not get along on the set, false, "I saw the article, honestly, there were no problems with Sigourney...ever". Cameron explained that Weaver's film before Aliens, Half-Moon Street, ran overschedule into that of Aliens, not allowing the actress a break between the two films. He adds that Weaver was required on the set everyday since she was in almost every scene. "Our working relationship was the best," he says praising Weaver's contributions to the picture while also noting that when he did disagree with his star on certain story elements, it was dissent that he encouraged and was

constructive and amiable allowing him to improve on the material he had written, but also stated that "9 out of 10 times she wound up saying what was in the script." Also included among the Cameron alumni was actor Michael Biehn [see separate article] who replace James (48 Hours) Remar as Corporal Hicks. According to Cameron, Remar was replaced because of "creative differences" upon which he refused to elaborate.

The film which runs 2 hours and 17 minutes is relatively long for a major studio summer release and Cameron does acknowledge that both Fox and exhibitors put pressure on him to cut the film to two hours. He rejected the requests since he felt the films' structure would be damaged by such drastic cutting and would leave only the action scenes intact. He adds that highly touted scenes like Ripley's discovery that her daughter had died of old age were unnecessary and were overkill since the scenes were shot and a part of Weaver's performance anyway. He does admit that there are scenes and "cul de sacs" he regrets having to remove from the final cut.

Francois Truffaut while still a French film critic for Cahiers du Cinema coined the term auteur in the late 50's which was later popularized by Andrew Sarris of the Village Voice theorizing that the director is the "author" of a film. According to the theory, film is a work of art and is stamped with the personality of its creator, its director, who gives the film its distinctive qualities. While many filmmakers and critics dispute the theory stressing that film is a collaborative effort, Cameron who is a director and a screenwriter, who has also worked as an art director on Battle Beyond The Stars, co-supervisor of special effects on Escape From New York and was production designer on Galaxy of Terror [also known as: Planet of Horrors and Mind-Warp], and is also an artist and illustrator, does not quickly discount the theory that he is an auteur. While he concedes that the term is "pretentious" he also adds that he is very involved with seeing that his vision is well-transposed to the silver screen taking on many of the tasks a director normally delegates to others including supervising the color correction on the final print and overseeing the production of the 70mm, six-track Dolby prints. "When you think about it," Cameron states, "the director takes the rap so I am just terrified of not having things go right" which is only one of the reasons he is involved with every facet of the film's production.

While Cameron may not necessarily regard himself as an auteur, Hurd is quick to brand Cameron as one. Hurd's respect for Cameron's work is instantly apparent and in fact if one is to compliment his abilities she would be the first one to add



the superlative adjectives. "I think Jim is an auteur," comments Hurd. "He has a very precise vision of the film." In order to see his vision translated intact Cameron utilizes a unique new technique, video storyboarding, to insure that the film is cut to his specifications. According to the film's production notes, Hurd says, "Jim has been recording shots with a video camera as he wants them. This is a much better device than just regular artwork story-boards. The effects people can see exactly the composition of the shot and what the director requires. We can then cut it to length so that editor Ray Lovejoy can allocate the number of seconds each particular scene requires. It is very difficult to convey exactly what your require through a static drawing. You can't indicate speed or how the shot should move."

Joe Dante (Gremlins, Piranha) did see Piranha II, Cameron's first directorial effort after leaving the New World camp, a sequel to the film Piranha. "He liked it," says Cameron. "He saw it before I recut it," he says discussing the overseas release which was later re-edited by Cameron for the films exhibition in America which "was shorter, which is probably a good thing." Giving the movie the benefit of the doubt, Cameron calls it a "mediocre film" which at least moved at a quick pace and featured some good performances. At the very least the film will be remembered as being the set on which a very ill James Cameron came up with the idea for The Terminator and the epitomy of Italian producers approach to making a film profitable, adding topless bimbos to a film already full of mediocre special effects and several bloody death scenes.

Both Cameron and Hurd are also cinemaphiles who try to get to the movies as often as they can. "We go to the movies almost every night," says Hurd, who lists A Room With A View and Dreamchild as two of her favorite pictures to be released recently. Cameron speaks highly of Oliver Stone's film Salvador featuring James Woods and Jim Belushi as one of the more "interesting" pictures released this year. Both are fans of science-fiction in both its literary and cinematic incarnations.

The film which opened spectacularly to over \$10 million in its first weekend and mostly strong reviews seems assured of success. Some critics are already hailing the former truck driver turned director as "the next Spielberg". Only time will tell if the praise is not overstated. Regardless, the director/producer team seems to have a bright future although they will be parting ways, during the day at least. Hurd is prepping an apartheid drama, The Silent Man for Fox while Cameron, on the other hand, has no immediate plans. Rest assured though that the man who was in part responsible for three of the most successful films of all-time won't stay idle for long.

GJ

## L.A. EFFECTS: THE SFX OF ALIENS

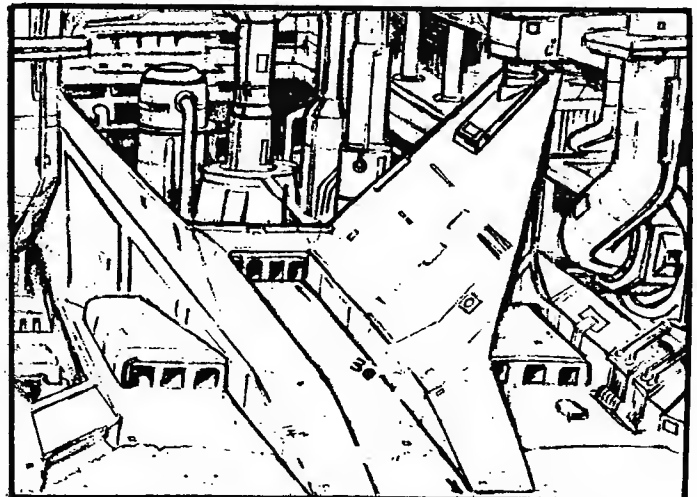
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The shot of the ship rescuing Ripley from the deteriorating platform which was affectionately dubbed the "Blue Thunder" shot by Markowitz involved the shooting of many process plates. The main unit did rephotography and added foreground explosions. The visual effects teams pyrotechnics had to match the explosions on the live action stage. In order to accomplish this difficult coordination, L.A. Effects utilized Pinewood's Process Department Triple Head Projector and took advantage of it to the fullest.

L.A. Effects was also responsible for creating miniatures of the Queen Alien which was used in the closing sequence. A miniature Powerloader was also built duplicating the full scale one built by John Richardson. "There is also a sculptor of Sigourney used which Doug Beswick built. He put hair, exactly what she was wearing in the fight scene, shoes, everything was put on her," says Suzanne Benson. The miniatures were intercut with the live action. L.A. Effects did not participate in photographing the scene though, only the construction of the miniatures. The company left the production after completing 80% of the visual effects due to a "parting of the ways" with Twentieth-Century Fox, according to Steven Benson.

The art of visual effects is not taken lightly by the crew of L.A. Effects as Steven Benson points out, "We believe visual effects are a definite art form and we like to believe that we create art." He adds that the colony complex itself is copyrighted as a work of art in the Library of Congress, "the same way the Mona Lisa would be."

Both Benson's look forward to even bigger and more challenging projects in the future. "My favorite line is 'live long and prosper'," says Steven Benson. "We are looking at continued success." GJ



Cameron's rendering of the AP Station (Note the APC at right)

The Star Trek television series has been heralded for a number of achievements. Foremost among these is the superb music that accompanied Roddenberry's Horatio Hornblower of the stars. A number of fine composers left their mark on Star Trek, but none more apparent than Alexander Courage whose main title became known worldwide as the trademark of the series.

Courage reminisced fondly of his younger days when he and Andre Previn would sit on the proverbial back porch and dream of conducting. He enlisted in the Air Force as a band leader during World War II after having studied at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Ultimately he came to California in pursuit of his dream and, more immediately, a girl. "I just kind of fell into it [film scoring]. I really wanted to be a conductor and I got interested in doing some arranging. It just sort of happened. I've been very lucky."

Courage's feature film credits include Tokyo After Dark, The Left Handed Gun and The Sun Also Rises. He has arranged the music for Guys & Dolls, Porgy & Bess and Hello Dolly among others. His work for television includes an impressive 300 episodes for 56 different series including The Waltons, Lost In Space and Voyage To The Bottom of the Sea. His involvement with Star Trek came about as a result of his relationship with Wilbur Hatch who helped him get his start in composing and conducting for CBS Radio (1946-53). "He [Hatch] was doing the music for the original Lucy radio show which was called My Favorite Husband. When that became the Lucy Show he continued to do it. When Lucille Ball bought Desilu he came in as head of music. So when Star Trek came on the scene Wilbur suggested me to Roddenberry and I turned out a theme. Roddenberry liked it and that was it."



# ALEXANDER COURAGE

## BOLDLY GOING WHERE NO COMPOSER HAS GONE BEFORE

BY STEVEN A. SIMAK

Roddenberry was very clear on getting away from the "bleep-bleep" electronic music typically associated with science-fiction in the past. "He said I don't want any space music," commented Courage, "I want adventure music." With that in mind he scored the two pilots and four additional episodes. Courage's music brought an emotional depth and power to the series that was not overlooked by the producers of the three theatrical films. Although they did want new music the producers felt that it was important to reprise some of Courage's original thematic material in order to reunite audiences with the spirit of the original series. "Jerry Goldsmith did Star Trek-The Motion Picture and he called me up one day and in one of his inimitable voices he said that they were going to need about 33 seconds of my theme in his score and would I do that for him. I said sure, do you want it up high or low, slow, fast, what? And he said, 'Oh, slow and low.'" Courage laughed, "I know that James Horner has used it here and there, pieces of the fanfare and all that because he was told to. It's that simple. I know a lot of people around town and I go into the store and they know I have written it and they say, 'Are they going to use your theme in the picture?' and I say, 'Well I guess so' and they say, 'They'd better!' So that's generally the way it seems to have worked."

Unfortunately, most of the master tapes holding the original music written for the series were reported lost in the infamous fire and flood at Paramount. But even prior to this, the whereabouts of the tapes were something of a mystery. "Many years ago, I guess way back in the early 70's, I would get phone calls from various Trekkies around the country who managed to get my phone number saying they would like to come out here from Detroit or wherever it was and would I take them to see the music [tapes] from Star Trek. So I phoned Paramount and I went up there with these people into the loft above the music department with a flashlight that I had brought from the car. We started looking for the Star Trek music and there wasn't any to speak of. There were three or four boxes of junk up there with parts of scores and parts of parts of everything else. Fred Steiner [who scored 11 episodes of the series] is the one who somehow, I really don't know how he did it, found all the Star Trek music...It was a mystery because I don't know what they

did with it. One of the things was that the series was done for Desilu and when Paramount bought Desilu I think they just dumped all the music for Desilu up in the loft somewhere. Dear old Fred got busy on it and found it all."

What many fans are not aware of is that among the music composed for Star Trek are lyrics written by Gene Roddenberry for the main theme. "I had a rider attached to my contract by, I guess it was Roddenberry's lawyer with Roddenberry's approval, that said that if he ever wrote a lyric to the Star Trek theme, used or unused, he would collect royalties. So I signed that and completely forgot about it. About 2 or 3 years later I got a phone call from the lawyer saying we're going to be collecting half your royalties from here on out and that's exactly what happened. It's finally been recorded by somebody; one of my daughters heard it on the radio one time, ran and copied down the name and I managed to get a recording of it. It's not bad. It's a terrible lyric actually but if it had been a good lyric that would have been great...it's very corny. It doesn't scan properly. If he had done a good lyric it would have been marvelous because then we would have gotten a lot of play with vocals and all that. But this way he just did a lyric and then collected on it. It was just a legal technicality."

The music for Star Trek was an important success for Courage, "It was wonderful to have had it," he said while relating his fascination over the longevity of the series and the new generations of loyal viewers that are growing up with Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock for the first time. But Courage ultimately wanted to leave the series to move onto larger, more prestigious projects. "The series was not doing well at all and it hung on by its fingernails for three years. I just told Gene that I had to quit. I was doing a very big film at Fox which at that point was the biggest musical ever made [Dr. Doolittle] and I had a joint credit with Lionel Newman. I wanted to get back to Fox because I was doing an enormous amount of television there and Star Trek was a bust."

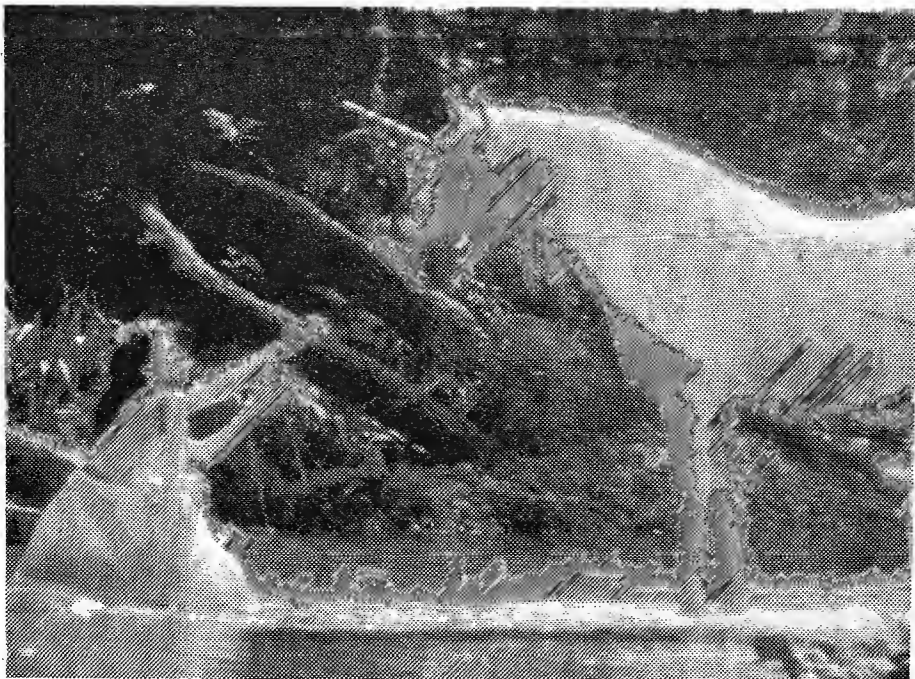
Although no longer scoring films, Courage is still very active with the industry. He teaches film composition at USC, is currently working on ideas for arrangements with the Boston Pops and recently orchestrated the unused score for Legend, composed by long-time friend Jerry Goldsmith. "For this country they are so hornswaggled as to what they should do with this film. They don't really know what it's about and they can't figure it out. So what they did was have Tangerine Dream put some kind of score to it for this country's release only -- which was kind of predictable."

"Jerry wrote an absolutely gorgeous score for that picture. It was marvelous, including a lot of nice little songs...Variety said it was one of the best scores he's ever done, which is a shame to see it go to waste."

Most importantly, in a career that spans nearly four decades Alexander Courage has no regrets and can point to a lifetime of memories. "Working with Fred Astaire, that was marvelous," he said nostalgically, "Sometimes you do something and it just works like a charm and that's when the whole thing just comes out absolutely right and everybody gets excited and it's just marvelous. That's worth it." GJ

LYRICS TO STAR TREK  
written by Gene Roddenberry

Beyond  
The rim of star-light  
My love  
Is wand'ring in star-flight  
I know  
He'll find in star-clustered reaches  
Love,  
Strange love a star woman teaches.  
I know  
His journey ends never  
His star trek  
Will go on forever.  
But tell him  
While he wanders his starry sea  
Remember, remember me





MICHAEL J. FOX  
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BORING; THAT ONLY ONE CLASS OF MOVIES ARE BEING MADE. THEY WOULD SAY IF YOU COMPARE EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN FILMS, EUROPEAN MOVIES ARE MORE ARTY...

MF: What I think is that maybe European make movies to satisfy their artistic needs and Americans make films to satisfy their bank accounts. There is nothing wrong with that. They make movies to make money. Everytime people buy tickets they vote. It is kind of art by democracy. If they don't vote for something then they won't make another movie like that. If Americans were dissatisfied with a lot of these movies they wouldn't go and see them. American filmmakers feel they are doing the right thing. Everybody is happy. They're making money and the public is paying the money so they are happy.

GJ: DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT'S A PROBLEM THAT FILMMAKERS CONSIDER MOVIES THAT DEAL WITH IMPORTANT, VALID THEMES, FINANCIAL RISKS?

MF: What's valid? If people go and see it, its valid for them. I really don't have too much of an opinion on it. There are films that I like and others that I don't like. I think that Back to the Future satisfies some of those needs, emotional needs, so there are things being said besides a bunch of flash and glitter. Some movies break new ground and some movies just stay on the same ground because the audience obviously had enough yet. And they don't want to leave.

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SEBASTIANO CASSINELLI PAIEWONSKY has interviewed Michael J. Fox and George Stevens Jr. for the Justice, the Brandeis University newspaper and is a senior. This is his first article for the Galactic Journal.

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TOM HOLLAND  
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After the unpleasant experiences of seeing some previous screenplays adapted to the screen by other directors Holland insisted on remaining faithful to his screenplay. "I have a career of director's who didn't [stick to screenplays]. I'm sure as hell going to shoot what I wrote." Despite some of the problems he has experienced, Holland is pleased with both Mark Lester's work on his screenplay for Class of '84 and Richard Franklin's Psycho II.

#### THE DARK SIDE OF FRIGHT

Although there are some Hitchcockian elements evident in both Fright Night and some of his earlier screen work he does not feel that there was a conscious influence by Hitchcock on his work, "God knows I know his work, but I know John Ford and Howard Hawks too. I think if you are going to do a thriller you can't sort of not touch on Hitchcock. He discovered so much of it."

Two screenplays of Holland's are still unproduced, The Crystal Tower, a variation on the Arthurian legends and Border Crossing, a film noir. However it does not appear as though either will be made in the near future. "You mention noir out here and the studios go into a state of shock," Holland says of studios reluctance and pure ignorance to the classic 1940's film genre. He attests to the many difficulties in getting films made, but does not feel his work is mainly shaped by commercial considerations. "Film is a big business. It's a marriage of art and greed and I've never been greedy, but I want to make movies and [the studios] they have to be convinced they'll make money. Would you give me 8 million if you knew I was going to lose it all? There's always that kind of pressure that comes from the studios."

#### THE END?

And what of a sequel? "Evil Ed has got a terrible curse on him," exclaims Holland. "I was thinking that if Charlie was his friend he'd help him. I think it would be alot of fun." What would he call the sequel? "The Return of Evil Ed," he jokes.

And now with the success of Fright Night, what does the future of the genre hold according to Holland. "I think we'll be seeing alot of vampire films from now on."

GJ

## POLTERGEIST II

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The film's score is composed by Jerry Goldsmith (Mr. Goldsmith discussed scoring Poltergeist in GJ #18-Ed.) who employs a haunting chorus in his update on his Academy Award nominated score for Poltergeist.

"Fascination and thrills in a safe experience," said Tobe Hooper of Poltergeist in 1982. "There are no murders, no blood. It is like those little packages of Chinese firecrackers that explode in little crackles and scare people for a moment, but ultimately make everybody happy." This experience was one Executive Producer Freddie Fields hopes to duplicate in the sequel, "Although it's a continuation of Poltergeist, the film has taken on many different dimensions and emotional experiences. I think the end result is something audiences will walk away from remembering, and wanting to come back to see again." GJ



## POLTERGEIST II

### THE OTHER SIDE

*An Analysis*  
By Mark A. Altman

Poltergeist II is an inept follow-up to the original which has secured its place as a classic of contemporary horror. It is unfortunate that the sequel is such a dreadful failure since it had the potential to be a tremendous success. Unfortunately, the sequel has no sense of direction and is unable to sustain the intensity of the original for any extended period of time.

The continuation of the Freeling story was a wise idea, as they are an interesting family, played ably by a fine group of thespians. However, ultimately the Freelings' saga is reduced to the "Brady Bunch Meets Ghostbusters". The theme of love conquering all is a beautiful one, but is overplayed and eventually rendered inane by the films' unexciting and stupid ending which is redeemed only by the superb special effects created by Richard Edlund and his crew.

Julian Beck is excellent as the evil Reverend Kane, but Will Sampson is equally awful as the Indian Taylor. The introduction of ludicrous Indian folklore detracts from the story and credibility of the film. A good horror film requires the willing suspension of disbelief, not total disregard for logic and validity by the befuddled viewer.

Yes, Poltergeist II does have some wit and charm about it and the scenes of Carol Anne receiving mysterious phone calls from the other side and the possession of Craig T. Nelson are well executed, but for the most part the film is neither scary nor terribly original. One area in which the film definitely succeeds is the superb score by filmmusic master Jerry Goldsmith who introduces a haunting chorus reminiscent of the Omen into the established musical motifs introduced in the original film (which is notably absent from the soundtrack album).

One of the most chilling scenes is Reverend Kane attempting to capture Carol Anne at a shopping mall. There is minimal use of special effects (which were unnecessary in the first place), yet this is perhaps the most effective scene in the entire film.

All I can say is that the fans who believed those attempting to sequelize Poltergeist didn't stand a ghost of a chance were right...this film gives the supernatural a bad name. GJ

**NEXT ISSUE:** Look for a very special issue of GALACTIC JOURNAL magazine featuring a special 20th Anniversary Star Trek pull-out section. Politics & Science-Fiction: The Good, the Red and the Ugly, Evil Omen: An Analysis of Jerry Goldsmith's Omen scores and coverage of this summer's hottest motion pictures including Aliens, Maximum Overdrive and more...

